

Ph.D. Thesis

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Conflict of images. Conflict of memories. Jewish themes in the Polish right-wing nationalistic press in the light of articles from *Nasz Dziennik* 1998-2007.

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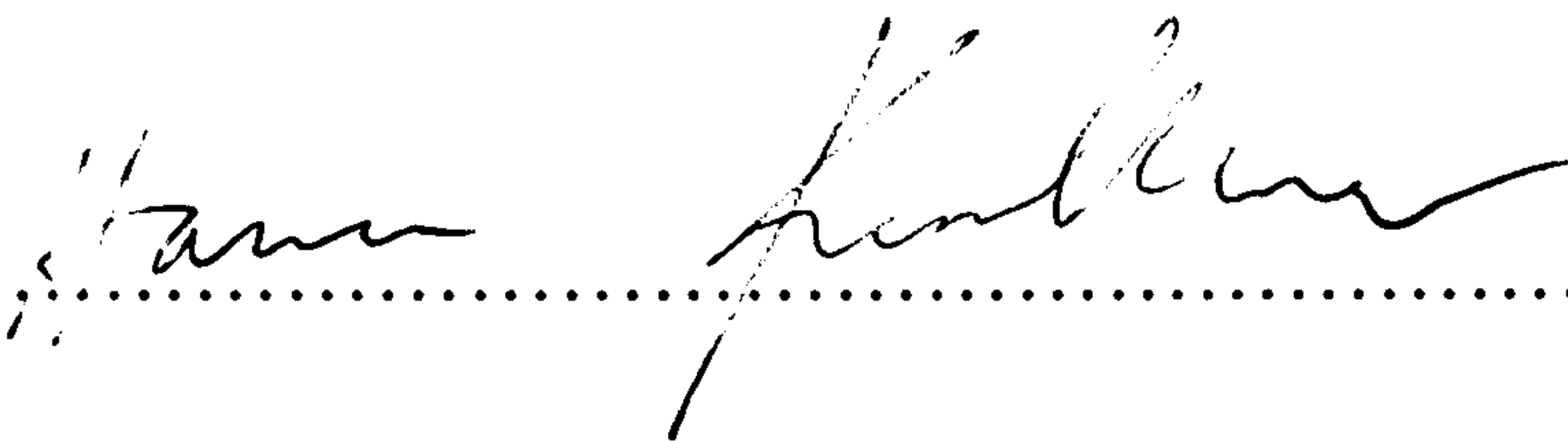
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**Declaration**

I, Hanna Maria Kwiatkowska, confirm that the work presented in this thesis is my own. Where information has been derived from other sources, I confirm that this has been indicated in the thesis.

Signature..........Date: 31. 03. 08.....

## Abstract

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Conflict of images. Conflict of memories. Jewish themes in the Polish right-wing nationalistic press in the light of articles from *Nasz Dziennik* 1998-2007

The thesis examines Jewish themes found in the right-wing nationalistic daily, *Nasz Dziennik* from its launch in 1998 up to 2007. The aim of the work is to expose and analyse the negative image of the Jew presented in *Nasz Dziennik*. This image is formed as the newspaper discusses the current affairs, especially the situation in the Middle East. It is also created through reflections on Polish-Jewish relations throughout history. This meant that the thesis touches on a variety of historical events, including those very contentious ones for both sides. The most prominent ones being the Holocaust, the Kielce 1946 pogrom, Stalinist persecutions and the Jedwabne murder case of 1941.

In addition, the thesis explores the sociological, political and religious situation in the post-Communist Poland in order to shed light on what influences the rhetoric in *Nasz Dziennik*. The thesis explains the links the newspaper has with the right-wing political parties and Radio Maryja, infamous for broadcasting xenophobic and antisemitic material.

The work includes a comparative study between the material in the newspaper and that found in a pre-war nationalistic-religious daily *Maly Dziennik*, which can be seen as its predecessor. The comparison allowed establishing connections between the newspaper's ideological agenda and the views advocated by the pre-war *Endecja* (National Democrats).

Finally, the thesis demonstrates how the antisemitic rhetoric found in *Nasz Dziennik* stems out of the challenge to the over-idealised image of the Poles held by the right-wing circles. The more objectified image of the Poles is proposed by scholars, journalists and other intellectuals, who allow the Jewish perspective in the narrative of the Polish-Jewish relations. The thesis explains why this perspective, and in particular the narrative about the Jewish suffering during the Holocaust, threatens those who are associated with the reviving right-wing nationalistic ethos in Poland today.



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## **Outline of work**

### **Introduction**

- Primary sources and literature
- Methodology
- Background information about *Nasz Dziennik* discusses its history, ethos, links to Father Tadeusz Rydzyk's media empire. It presents a sociological profile of the readers of *Nasz Dziennik* as well as listeners of Radio Maryja. The introduction explains the place of *Nasz Dziennik* in the press market and tries to answer the question why it achieved such success despite the competition from many Catholic weeklies and periodicals. I also explore the political links of the newspaper.

### **Chapter I: Antisemitism**

This introductory chapter presents different definitions of and approaches to analyse antisemitism. Further, using the works of H. Arendt, G. Langmuir and R. Girard I provide a working definition of antisemitism that I will refer to in my research. In addition, I outline the key questions that will guide me when analysing antisemitic materials. The second part of the chapter provides an overview of the history of antisemitism in Poland since the early 20<sup>th</sup> century until the present. It also introduces the latest sociological research on antisemitism in Poland after the breakdown of the Communist regime.

### **Chapter II: Holocaust**

The chapter introduces the issue of the place of the Jews in Polish collective memory and outlines the Polish and Jewish experiences during the occupation. Further, it shows how *Nasz Dziennik* discusses and compares Polish and Jewish suffering during the war. Other themes discussed in the chapter include: the 'Holocaust industry', textbooks on the Holocaust, the Museum of the History of Polish Jews and KL Warschau. I also discuss how *Nasz Dziennik* presents the 'Polish face' of Auschwitz and tries to 'Polonise' the Holocaust. Finally, I examine how different terms used to

describe what happened to the Jews during World War II reflect on one's stance on the uniqueness of the Holocaust.

### **Chapter III: Jewish property restitution**

The chapter introduces the general issue of property restitution in Poland and in particular of the legislation from 1997 which regulates restitution of Jewish religious sites and communal property. Further, I present how *Nasz Dziennik* reports on the process of restitution of Jewish property, with a special focus on the Poznań synagogue case.

### **Chapter IV: Jedwabne**

The revelations about the massacre committed against Jews by their Polish neighbours in 1941 have shaken the image of Polish heroism during the war that dominated collective memory. The chapter presents how *Nasz Dziennik* responded to the publication in 2000 of *Neighbors* by Jan Tomasz Gross and the ensuing debate in the media. The chapter identifies the major watersheds in *Nasz Dziennik*'s reporting on the case, which were related to the screening of a documentary about Jedwabne, the state commemorations of the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the massacre and the results of the exhumation and the official investigation into the massacre. Finally, I discuss how *Nasz Dziennik*'s attitudes compare to the mainstream debate about Jedwabne and to the attitudes of Polish society at large.

### **Chapter V: IPN**

The chapter discusses how *Nasz Dziennik* views the Institute of National Remembrance which carried out an investigation into the Jedwabne massacre and other controversial cases discussed in the newspaper.

### **Chapter VI: The Kielce 1946 pogrom**

The chapter discusses how *Nasz Dziennik*, and in particular Prof. Jerzy Robert Nowak, explain the reasons behind the pogrom and why this topic became prominent in the newspaper after 2001. Also, it presents *Nasz Dziennik*'s reaction to the publication in 2006 of *Fear* by J. T. Gross.



## **Chapter VII: ‘Crimes committed against Poles by Jews’**

The chapter summarizes *Nasz Dziennik*’s outlook on the Żydokomuna myth and the claims that Jews are responsible for the Stalinisation of Poland and the crimes committed by the security apparatus during the Communist regime.

## **Chapter VIII: ‘Anti-Polonism’**

*Nasz Dziennik* documents thoroughly the negative coverage about Poland and the Poles in the international media, especially in relation to the Holocaust and the Jedwabne massacre, and more broadly to the so called ‘Polish antisemitism’. This chapter explains why *Nasz Dziennik* identified a new phenomenon – anti-Polonism.

## **Chapter IX: Israel**

The chapter provides an overview of *Nasz Dziennik*’s reporting on the situation in the Middle East, including its iconography of the conflict. I also discuss the relation between the so called ‘new antisemitism’ and attitudes of *Nasz Dziennik* towards Israel. Finally, I explore how the reporting on Israel affects the overall image of the Jew presented in the newspaper.

## **Chapter X: Religious antisemitism?**

The chapter discusses the issues surrounding the Jewish-Christian dialogue in general and in Poland in particular. It reflects on the influence of the late John Paul II on *Nasz Dziennik*’s attitude towards interfaith dialogue. Also, I discuss *Nasz Dziennik*’s coverage of the controversies caused by the presence of the Carmelite convent in Auschwitz and that of the papal cross and the additional field of crosses there. The chapter also registers a significant change of rhetoric in *Nasz Dziennik* following the discussion in Polish media about Mel Gibson’s film *The Passion of the Christ* (2004).

## **Chapter XI: Politics**

The chapter outlines how antisemitism has been frequently exploited in the Polish political arena. It discusses the role Radio Maryja and *Nasz Dziennik* play in political life, especially how these media influence the results of elections and use of the significant electorate scornfully branded as ‘woolly hats’. I also present *Nasz Dziennik*’s views on the EU and its links to the political parties, in particular the League of Polish Families (LPR) and Law and Order (PiS).



## **Chapter XII: Ideological roots**

The chapter traces back the ideological roots of *Nasz Dziennik* by providing a comparative survey of the Jewish themes in the daily and those of its pre-war (informal) predecessor *Mały Dziennik*.

## **Conclusion**

The chapter seeks to answer what are the immediate causes as well as deeper roots of antisemitism in *Nasz Dziennik*.

## **Appendix**

Chart mapping the frequency of appearance of articles related to the Jedwabne case in *Nasz Dziennik* in 2001 and 2002.

## **Bibliography**

# Introduction

## Primary sources

I have researched material found in *Nasz Dziennik* published over eight years, since it was launched in 1998 until 2007. The core of the material analysed in detail in this work comes from the period 1998-2006, as for the material from May 2006 to August 2007 I point to the main themes and changes in the discourse of the newspaper whenever it is most relevant. Analysing a current newspaper brings many challenges, of course some of the themes I referred to already became outdated and less relevant. However, I focus not on the factual value of the newspaper but on its relevance for cultural analysis as it is a great source of information about current nationalistic ideology that entered mainstream media. I researched *Nasz Dziennik* systematically, number by number. In the case of material from the first two years since *Nasz Dziennik*'s launch I used the Newspapers Archives of the National Library in Kraków. A few of the issues in this early period were missing from the collection, however I do not think this had a bearing upon my analysis as prior to 2001 and the 'Jedwabne case' *Nasz Dziennik*'s preoccupation with the Jews was not as intense as it became later. In addition, I surveyed periodically the main Polish national newspapers, especially *Gazeta Wyborcza* to cross-examine the materials. I also looked into less popular, in terms of circulation numbers, right-wing nationalistic titles.

In addition, I conducted research of the pre-war right-wing daily, *Mały Dziennik* published between 1935 and 1939. I was able to use microfilms of *Mały Dziennik* 1935-1939 thanks to a generous grant from the London University Central Research Fund. Comparative analysis of the Jewish themes in *Nasz Dziennik* with those found in the pre-war publication, *Mały Dziennik*, was crucial for my research. Even the similarity of the titles is not coincidental as *Mały Dziennik*, set up by Maximilian Kolbe, can be seen as an ideological predecessor of the current daily. I was able to demonstrate that *Nasz Dziennik*'s contempt for Jews and disregard for their suffering can be traced back to its pre-war ideological roots.



## Literature

There are very few monographs on the right-wing press in Poland after 1989. This lacuna extends to scholarship in general on the re-emerging right-wing movement. The most significant and recent work *Zamiast Procesu* by M. Tulli and S. Kowalski presents excerpts from five right-wing titles collected in 2001. I reviewed this book in the journal *East European Jewish Affairs* and demonstrated that analyzing such source as a newspaper over a longer time brings better results in terms of assessing its ideological goals.<sup>1</sup> The general literature from the field of media studies was also useful in establishing trends on the Polish market and in my research on media rhetoric. However, monographs on media outdate very fast, thus I relied more on current media analysis found in Polish dailies and periodicals.

While the sources on the right-wing press in today's Poland are scarce, the literature on the Jewish-Polish topics discussed in *Nasz Dziennik* is abundant. This is especially in the case of such events as the Kielce 1946 pogrom or the Jedwabne massacre case. In my research I made an effort to keep a balance between the Polish and Western sources on these topics. I also referred to the right-wing scholars who write monographs about these historical events. Not incidentally many of the right-wing Polish authors also publish their essays in *Nasz Dziennik*.

More generally, I researched secondary sources on such topics as collective memory, and Polish collective memory about the Jews in particular, Polish nationalism since 1918, Jewish-Catholic relations before World War II, educational programmes about the Holocaust in Poland and the phenomenon of anti-Zionism and the so-called 'new antisemitism'. The most useful and representative sociological research on antisemitism in Poland since the breakdown of Communist regime is provided by the team of Prof. I. Krzemiński. The studies were carried out in 1992 and 2002 and I refer to both throughout this work as they provide background information on attitudes towards Jews in Poland and how those changed after such prominent public discussion as the one on the Jedwabne massacre.

Finally, in the first stage of my PhD research, as much as it was possible using sources in English, I investigated antisemitism in the right-wing press in other East European countries. Subsequently, the findings of this survey were not included in this work, mainly due to the limitation of material available in English and a

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<sup>1</sup> H. Kwiatkowska, 'Bad news', review of S. Kowalski, M. Tulli, *Zamiast procesu. Raport o mowie nienawiści*, (Warsaw, 2003) *East European Jewish Affairs*, 35/1 (June 2005), pp. 125-128.



methodological problem of comparing the sources with my findings. However, this initial research was very informative and as a result I can identify some similarity between the situation in Poland and her neighbours. Significantly, the debate about the ‘dark history’ seems to stir up a similar backlash of antisemitic arguments among the nationalists in Slovakia, Lithuania or Ukraine.<sup>2</sup> It also resembles the *Historikerstreit* – the Historians’ Debate in Germany in 1986.<sup>3</sup>

## Methodology

It was my objective that I should incorporate into this work as much material from *Nasz Dziennik* as feasible. In each chapter I grouped the material thematically, choosing the most representative examples of the antisemitic discourse for a particular theme. I often demonstrated how the presentation by the newspaper of a certain topic has evolved over the years and made references to the most significant similar articles, which were not included in my analysis. In case of the chapter on the Jedwabne massacre I abandoned the rule of presenting the material thematically, as it was more beneficial for my analysis to discuss the material in *Nasz Dziennik* against the background of the general public discussion on Jedwabne. Thus, this chapter is organized by the chronology of the so called ‘Jedwabne debate’.

My basic methodology was to identify what is *Nasz Dziennik* saying about the Jews and why is it choosing particular topics and language? The second stage of my analysis involved a more complex methodology; I needed to place the existing antisemitic discourse in the context of Polish current affairs (the political and economic situation) as well as in the historical context of the antisemitic discourse in general and in particular the kind we find in modern Polish history. Ruth Wodak called this method a discourse-historical approach in which a researcher makes ‘the attempt to integrate systematically all available background information in the

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<sup>2</sup> Y. Bauer (ed.), *The danger of Antisemitism in Central and Eastern Europe in the wake of 1989-1990*, (Jerusalem, 1991); R. L. Braham (ed.), *Anti-Semitism and the treatment of the Holocaust in Postcommunist Eastern Europe*, (New York, 1994); M. Butora, Z. Butorova, *Wariness toward Jews and “Postcommunist Panic” in Slovakia, International Perspectives* (series), (New York, 1992); R. Cohen, J. L. Golub, *Attitudes toward Jews in Poland, Hungary and Czechoslovakia. A comparative survey, working papers on contemporary anti-Semitism*, (New York, 1991); *Anti-Semitism at the end of the XX<sup>th</sup> century, Judaica Slovaca Series*, vol. 55, (Bratislava, 2002); P. Meštan, *Anti-Semitism in Slovak politics (1989-1999)*, (Bratislava, 2000). This topic has been extensively covered in journals: *East European Jewish Affairs*, *Slavic Review* and *Patterns of Prejudice*. Many Jewish organisations in those countries publish extensive reports on antisemitism but usually their scholarly value is questionable.

<sup>3</sup> P. Baldwin (ed.), *Reworking the Past. Hitler, the Holocaust and the Historians’ Debate*, (Boston, 1990). Also see chapter II: Holocaust.



analysis and interpretation of the many layers of the text.’<sup>4</sup> This integration of the current material with the broader context was essential when identifying allusions and metaphors, things said ‘between the lines’ and decoding certain terms. For example without the knowledge of the late 19<sup>th</sup> and the early 20<sup>th</sup> century right-wing discourse on Jews and freemasons, I would not have been able to identify the code word ‘freemasons’ as meaning Jews. Similarly, in *Nasz Dziennik* the adjective ‘Polish-speaking’ refers to Jews and the media that the newspaper identifies as Jewish.

Finally, any discourse is a reflection of sociological and psychological patterns of behaviour. Thus, as an additional analytical tool I introduced a paradigm of scapegoating (for the definition see chapter I: Antisemitism), against which I verified the motives behind verbal attacks on Jews in the Polish right-wing milieu and *Nasz Dziennik* in particular. The scapegoating paradigm has been especially useful when identifying short term causes, even those less obvious ones, of the antisemitic outbursts.

I think that linguistic analysis that I provide throughout this work and the comments on language ambiguities and phonetic word-plays, have been a valuable tool in analysing the antisemitic discourse. It has to be pointed out that most of the Polish articles published on the topic of antisemitic discourse in Poland take the meaning of the language used for granted, resorting only to quoting some of the most outrageous excerpts. Because this work is written in English I was forced to highlight what in Polish would have been obvious. This led to a deepening of my analysis of the discourse, as I became more sensitive to the nuances of the language used by *Nasz Dziennik*.

I was not using any reference/data management software commonly used in the press and sociological research. I tested the value of a statistical presentation of the material in the case of articles published on Jedwabne in 2001 and 2002 (see Appendix). I grouped the articles in three categories demonstrating the level of their relevance to the topic of the Jedwabne massacre. However, the usefulness of such data was very limited, as some of the most important and most antisemitic statements in relation to Jedwabne were made in articles seemingly not related to that topic. Also, it is not the statistical number of appearance of articles on one topic or the frequency

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<sup>4</sup> R. Wodak, ‘*Das Ausland* and Anti-Semitic Discourse: The Discursive Construction of the Other’, in S. H. Riggins, *The Language and Politics of Exclusion. Others in Discourse*, (London, 1997), p. 65.



of their appearance that demonstrate the fluctuating levels of hatred in the antisemitic discourse.

### **Background information about *Nasz Dziennik***

In 1991 the first broadcast of Radio Maryja was aired in two cities Toruń and Bydgoszcz. These modest beginnings could not foretell the imminent national success of the station. From the onset Radio Maryja was headed by Father Tadeusz Rydzyk, an energetic priest, a member of the Redemptorist order. He spent many years in Germany and then came back to Poland to set up a national radio with a Roman Catholic ethos. In 1994 Radio Maryja was licensed by the National Council for Radio and Television [Krajowa Rada Radiofonii i Telewizji] as a national broadcaster of social-religious content.<sup>5</sup> This means that the radio station cannot air advertisements and has to comply with a number of regulations.<sup>6</sup> Unlike in commercial stations, in Radio Maryja there are no irritating jingles, instead a soothing invitation to pray. It became a tonic for those who felt isolated by the post-Communist reality; pensioners, those with elementary education, unskilled workers, inhabitants of small towns and villages as well as of former industrial urban areas, where unemployment is rife. All those groups felt threatened by the ‘blood sucking’ capitalism, as their skills and ways of earning a livelihood suddenly became incompatible with the free economy.<sup>7</sup>

Two contrasting pictures illustrate Poland in the 1990s: one of multicoloured shelves of newly opened foreign supermarket chains and the other of shouting, angry employees of state farms, factories and mines who were made redundant. So Radio Maryja’s influence started growing in those turbulent times of economic transition as it spoke the language of the disillusioned and gave them consolation and hope. And indeed it was not only the promise of the justice in the world to come that gave hope to the listeners. In 1997 Father Rydzyk appealed on air to his devoted listeners for

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<sup>5</sup> Radio Maryja, next to RMF FM and Radio ZET, was one of the three stations that received a licence for national broadcasting. In addition, the KRRiTV gave licence to 184 local radios, of which 36 stations were local Catholic Church ones. After Z. Bajka, ‘Rynek mediów w Polsce’, in: Z. Bauer, E. Chudziński, (eds) *Dziennikarstwo i Świat Mediów*, (Kraków, 2000), pp. 96-97.

<sup>6</sup> J. Morawski, ‘Tajemnice Ojca Rydzyka’, *Rzeczpospolita*, 275: 26 Nov. 2002, pp. 1, A6 and M. Halawa, ‘When Nationalism Goes On Air: The Case of Poland and Radio Virgin Mary’, (seminar paper, manuscript).

<sup>7</sup> For analysis of relations between poverty and social exclusion as well as gender and unemployment in Poland see: G. Kolankiewicz, *Towards a sociology of the transition: rights, resources and social integration in Poland*, (London, 2000), p. 95.



donations so that the radio station (or rather as he argues now a grass-roots committee) will be able to buy the Gdańsk shipyard and save threatened jobs. To this day the ‘Father Director’, as he is known, has not accounted for the collection for the failed project.<sup>8</sup> This does not seem to trouble his devotees, and in all fairness Rydzyk’s impressive media projects show that at least some money that goes through the radio station is used in a way that benefits more people than just himself. Today mainstream media are hostile to Rydzyk and to what they call his ‘media empire’: associated with the radio station, the daily newspaper *Nasz Dziennik* [Our Daily], TV TRWAM [I Endure], a media school and a pilgrims centre in the radio station’s home town Toruń. In fact Rydzyk found himself under media attack over his financial dealings and the way he ‘rules his empire’ especially after the screening of the investigative documentary *Imperium Ojca Rydzyka* [Father Rydzyk’s Empire].<sup>9</sup> In my opinion these public criticisms were at times unnecessarily personal, and diverted the attention from the real issue – the content of some of the broadcasts. As a result, for his supporters Rydzyk gained something of a martyr status. On the other hand the overblown ambitions of ‘Father Director’ may be the downfall of his empire as not all his ventures show financial sustainability.

So what is so controversial about this religious station? Radio Maryja gained a bad reputation for giving a platform to those who are eager to express their bigoted and antisemitic views. This mainly has been occurring on the late night talk programme to which listeners can call in and encouraged by a sympathetic presenter, often Rydzyk himself, pour out all their sorrows on air. Frequently those callers express antisemitic and other hate enticing views. The Radio was criticized by the National Council for Radio and Television for not interrupting such calls and for leaving them without a comment. In February 2005 Lech Wałęsa boldly attacked Radio Maryja, though not for its xenophobic and antisemitic broadcasts, but for libelling him as a Communist agent and dismissing the Round Table Agreement<sup>10</sup> as a shamble.<sup>11</sup> This leads us to the core of the problem; for the Catholic elites the radio

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<sup>8</sup> M. Sandecki, S. Sowula, ‘Co zrobił o. Rydzyk z pieniędzmi na Stocznie’, *Gazeta Wyborcza*, 42: 18-19 Feb. 2006, pp. 1, 12-13.

<sup>9</sup> J. Morawski’s documentary *Imperium Ojca Rydzyka* was screen on TVP1 on 25 November 2002.

<sup>10</sup> The Round Table (Okragły Stół) talks took place between 6 Feb. and 5 Apr. 1989 between the Communist government and representatives of the opposition, which led to the first semi-free and democratic elections in 1989.

<sup>11</sup> ‘Wałęsa o Radiu Maryja’, *Gazeta Wyborcza*, 37: 14 Feb. 2005, pp. 1, 26; M. Wąs, M. Sterlingow, ‘Wałęsa pisze do biskupów’, *Gazeta Wyborcza Gdańsk*, 46: 24 Feb. 2005, p. 3.



station is too politicised. Moreover, the station stands on a religious-nationalistic platform, which has been especially apparent in its attacks on the EU and protests against Poland joining it.

Unfortunately for moderate and liberal church leaders the station's popularity matches the controversy that surrounds it. This even leads to fears of a pending schism within the Polish Roman Catholic Church. Especially, as among the Church officials the radio station has many fierce defenders, who regularly publicly show their support for the station. In fact, some bishops use the radio sponsored events as an opportunity to build up their public image. Each year on the anniversary of Radio Maryja's launch, page upon page of *Nasz Dziennik* are filled by greetings from bishops who sing the praises of the 'Father Director'. In such circumstances it is little wonder that Cardinal Józef Glemp found it impossible to promote his project Radio Józef, based in Warsaw, to overshadow the power of Radio Maryja. On 14 August 2002 the Cardinal even issued a critical statement challenging the independence of Radio Maryja parish groups. Some commentators suggested that this showed Glemp and other Church officials were not so much worried about the damaging contents of the Radio's programmes as about their own media ventures, especially as Radio Maryja monopolised donations from parishioners.<sup>12</sup>

Until 2005 there was still one person able to curb the station's controversial actions. John Paul II held undisputed moral authority in the eyes of Poles, even those who rarely set foot in a church. So why did the pope not put a stop to the station's airing antisemitic views? First of all, we have to look at the broader picture of the Roman Catholic Church. Though hierarchical, the Church still allows for a lot of regional independence. Similarly, various monastic orders enjoy relative autonomy. Outsiders become aware of these subtleties of the internal politics during crises such as the dispute over the convent in Auschwitz.<sup>13</sup> In that case, despite the Pope's clear stance on the issue, for years the relocation of the convent was put on hold, as its prioress did not agree to this solution. Similarly, the Polish bishops find it impossible to discipline Father T. Rydzyk as his superior is the head of the Redemptorist Order in Poland who in turn is answerable to the Superior General of the entire Redemptorist

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<sup>12</sup> *Rzeczpospolita*, 207: 5 Sep. 2002, p. A7.

<sup>13</sup> E. Klein, *The Battle for Auschwitz. Catholic-Jewish relations under strain*, (London, 2001); G. Zubrzycki, *The Crosses of Auschwitz. Nationalism and Religion in Post-Communist Poland*, (Chicago and London, 2006). See also chapter II: Holocaust, p. 65.



order not to the head of the Polish Catholic Church.<sup>14</sup> Some saw a clear message in the fact that during his last two pilgrimages to Poland the pope, John Paul II, did not visit Toruń and did not meet Father Rydzyk. However, this did not stop the ‘Father Director’, *Nasz Dziennik* and Radio Maryja to claim that the pope endorsed the station. Some of those claims were farfetched, as they interpreted greetings from the pope to the radio pilgrims as evidence of support for Father Rydzyk. Others, like the present Rydzyk received from the pope, the golden ornate, are more ambiguous. I do not want to speculate about the late pope’s attitude to Rydzyk, but some insight might be gained when we look at the attitude of John Paul II toward ‘Rydzyk’s predecessor’.

Though the radio station has never had another director, Rydzyk follows in the footsteps of another priest-turned-journalist, Saint Maximilian Kolbe. Before World War II Kolbe set up two very successful Catholic newspapers *Rycerz Niepokalanej*<sup>15</sup> and *Mały Dziennik*. These titles had a great impact on the spiritual life of Poles, but at the same time they promoted antisemitic ideas and supported the economic boycott of Jewish businesses. Kolbe died in Auschwitz, giving up his life for that of an inmate, thus becoming a symbol of Polish-Christian martyrdom during the war. Given the circumstances of Kolbe’s death and his growing cult in Poland, elevating him to sainthood was only a matter of formality, especially during the papacy that gave the Church more saints than any other. However, it can be highly debated whether John Paul II had to praise Kolbe as the father of the modern Catholic media. I think that one cannot help but read it as a clear message that as long as one spreads the word of Jesus and the veneration of the Holy Mother, he is forgiven the sin of antisemitism. However, at the same time we have to remember that antisemitism has been declared as a sin, by John Paul II. About the influence of this and other initiatives of the late pope on the religious media and the Church in general I will speak in chapter X.

In addition, we cannot ignore the fact that the head of the church has to be pragmatic and Radio Maryja is a success story; it made millions proud and excited about their Catholicism. Also, we have to look at the larger picture of antisemitism in Polish society. In a 2002 survey, 27% of respondents answered positively to antisemitic sentiments classified by Prof. Ireneusz Krzemiński as modern

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<sup>14</sup> The case of Rydzyk resembles that of Father Coughlin who in the 1930s in the US reached to millions of people with his antisemitic and politicised broadcasts.

<sup>15</sup> *Rycerz Niepokalanej* monthly in 1930s reached the circulation of 700,000, its calendar was the only publication in pre-war Poland of which circulation exceeded 1 million copies. See: A. Paczkowski, *Prasa Polska 1918-1939*, (Warsaw, 1980), p. 196.



antisemitism that is relating to politics, power or economy.<sup>16</sup> So Radio Maryja, together with its director, journalists, and listeners that call the station, is part of a general problem. And although some wish to see Rydzyk handing over his empire to some more moderate successors, this would not solve the problem, but merely get it off the air. However, the issue is that at the moment Rydzyk is Radio Maryja; even more, he enjoys a popularity that verges on a personality cult. Such popularity was enjoyed by another priest infamous for his antisemitic homilies and controversial 'Easter graves'.<sup>17</sup> The story of the 'rise and fall' (and a recent small rise) of Father Henryk Jankowski sheds some light on how society and the Church in particular deal with their *enfants terribles*.

Henryk Jankowski, the parish priest of the St Brygida church in Gdańsk during the Solidarity period, was close to the leaders of the trade unions. His church and home became a half-way house for many underground patriots during the martial law. Legend has it that if someone was in danger of being arrested by the secret police it was enough to hand over dangerous material, usually leaflets, to any child on the street with an instruction to hand it in to priest Jankowski. It is said that materials always arrived safely. Jankowski organised patriotic masses and he proved to be an impressive orator. In those times he became a celebrity, enjoying interest and visits from foreign media as well as state figures. In post-Communist Poland Jankowski became infamous for his antisemitic homilies. *Nasz Dziennik* printed some of his recent ones. Just like Rydzyk, Jankowski has some peculiar charisma about him, he is also driven by two missions. First of all he wants to continue being a political voice within the Church. Secondly, he wants to leave a legacy – a magnificent altar made of amber, one that is meant to rival the legendary Amber Room of the Catherine Palace in Tsarskoye Selo. This led to media speculations that Jankowski supported illegal exploitation of amber in the areas of national parks that brought ecological disaster to the coast. Interestingly, the parishioners seemed to be happy with Jankowski's costly project, despite the difficult financial situation of the region. Regarding antisemitism, after a number of scandals, the Church officials made some attempts to censor Jankowski. He only lost his post after allegations of inappropriate conduct towards altar boys. Nevertheless his parishioners were outraged at the decision. Most recently

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<sup>16</sup> I. Krzemiński (ed.), *Antysemityzm w Polsce i na Ukrainie, raport z badań*, (Warsaw, 2004).

<sup>17</sup> See the sycophantic biographies of Jankowski: P. Reina, *Ksiądz Prałat Jankowski walczy o prawdę*, (Warsaw, 1999); P. Reina, *Ks. Henryk Jankowski nie ma za co przepraszać*, (Warsaw, 1995).

Jankowski was involved in peculiar business ventures – launching wine and bottled mineral water bearing his name.<sup>18</sup>

Judging from the years of inaction and helplessness at Jankowski's antisemitic comments, I think we can expect the same towards Father Rydzyk. Both priests happened to hold high profile positions that they had made for themselves. Hence, we hear about them, but how many parish priests use the pulpit to promote xenophobic or antisemitism prejudice? In my work I show that a fair number of *Nasz Dziennik's* regular contributors expressing antisemitic views are clergymen. The Polish elites tend to view people such as Jankowski or Rydzyk as embarrassing lunatics, which suggests that they are exceptions to the rule. I would argue that only their eccentric personalities are exceptional. In fact, even the former head of the Polish Roman Catholic Church, Cardinal Józef Glemp (retired in July 2006) is known for his antisemitic comments. To cite one example, *Nasz Dziennik* printed the text of an interview with Primate J. Glemp issued in the context of the Jedwabne controversy. The Primate said: 'Polish-Jewish antagonisms used to happen for economical reasons. Jews were shrewder and knew how to exploit Poles – at least this is how they were perceived.' Further he posed a rhetorical question 'should not the Jews admit to their guilt towards the Poles, especially for the period of Bolshevik collaboration, for helping in the deportations to Siberia, for sending Poles to prisons for degrading their co-citizens etc. The fact that Poles took also part in those repressions does not change that in the UB [Security Office] the leading role was played by the Jews.'<sup>19</sup> Thus, we cannot expect a strong condemnation of antisemitic content in some media linked, though not officially, to the Church because the organisation itself is headed by those who are no shy about their negative feelings towards the Jews.

On the other hand, it would be extremely damaging to suggest that all the clergy and the Church officials in the Episcopate share antisemitic views. There are great personalities, who despite difficulties are devoted to the Catholic-Jewish dialogue such as Cardinal Franciszek Macharski, Bishop Prof. Tadeusz Pieronek, Stanisław Obirek and late Father Stanisław Musiał and many others who act at the parish level. Also the *Tygodnik Powszechny* weekly and the monthlies *Więź* and *Znak*

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<sup>18</sup> K. Włodkowska, 'Ks Jankowski: Zamieniam wino na wodę', *Gazeta Wyborcza*, 70: 22 Mar. 2006, p. 2

<sup>19</sup> 'Żydzi powinni uznać, że są winni wobec Polaków', *Nasz Dziennik*, 112: 15 May 2001, p. 10. When this statement was publicized by the authors of *Zamiast procesu*, the fierce defence of Glemp was launched by *Nasz Dziennik*.



promote dialogue and reconciliation. However, it is hard to escape the impression that individuals opposing antisemitism are like pioneers on an arid land.

After the critical statement challenging the independence of Radio Maryja parish groups issued by Cardinal J. Glemp on 14 August 2002 and the screening on TVP1 on 25 November 2002 of J. Morawski's documentary *Imperium Ojca Rydzyka*, the newspaper launched a campaign in defence of its spiritual guru. The documentary on Rydzyk encouraged a great media debate, the publicists wondered if 'the Church in Poland is threatened by a schism'. Mikołaj Lizut's article in *Gazeta Wyborcza* reported: 'Despite the fact that a majority of bishops in official statements stress that the Radio Maryja problem is demonised by the media, during the Episcopate's sitting it was apparent that the station long ago got out of control and the Church officials are divided and helpless'<sup>20</sup> in the face of this problem. On the other hand, Piotr Cywiński, the president of Warsaw's KIK<sup>21</sup>, stressed that one cannot talk about the schism in the Church, as dogmas are not a subject of the debate but rather the content of the Radio's programmes and *Nasz Dziennik*'s essays, especially 'dislike for the democratic mechanisms, propagating antisemitism, dividing Poles into real and not real ones'.<sup>22</sup> Also, bishop Pieronek spoke about populism in the Church when referring to ideas propagated by Father Rydzyk and his media.<sup>23</sup>

There are also other reasons why the Episcopate did not condemn antisemitic content in Rydzyk's media. As bishop Pieronek admitted 'some bishops like this radio station as it is.'<sup>24</sup> Those bishops who worried about the damaging contents spread by the radio do not necessarily focus on xenophobic statements about the Jews, but about the anti-EU propaganda. The bishops realised that Radio Maryja and *Nasz Dziennik* are a great success story, as, for example, Archbishop Gocłowski, is enthusiastic about its religious programmes. Gocłowski admitted: 'Political content in Radio Maryja that I question makes up only 10% of its programmes. However, as someone said, this 10% destroys the remaining 90%. Radio Maryja could still fulfil its fantastic evangelical role without identifying itself with total criticism, extreme right, isolationism, for example from everything European. Radio Maryja is there to

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<sup>20</sup> *Gazeta Wyborcza*, 238: 11 Oct. 2002, p. 8.

<sup>21</sup> Catholic Intelligentsia Club.

<sup>22</sup> *Rzeczpospolita*, 230: 2 Oct. 2002, p. A8.

<sup>23</sup> *Gazeta Wyborcza*, 202: 30 Aug. 2002, p. 2.

<sup>24</sup> *Gazeta Wyborcza*, 238: 11 Oct. 2002, p. 8.

evangelise, not to set up the political scene in Poland.’<sup>25</sup> Other commentators pointed out that while for some Catholics Radio Maryja is a scandal, others feel exactly the same about the liberal Catholic weekly *Tygodnik Powszechny*.<sup>26</sup> In other words, the Catholic Church in Poland is already divided and the existence of the radio station is only a reflection of this division.

In addition, addressing the problem of Radio Maryja and *Nasz Dziennik* means addressing a larger problem within the Church, namely antisemitism among those, who form a large section amid very religious Catholics. After all, the antisemitic statements on the radio and in *Nasz Dziennik* do not come solely from Father Rydzyk or the publicists. Listeners and readers, who strongly stress their attachment to the Catholic Church, use those media as a platform to voice their xenophobia and hatred. This is especially apparent in the radio’s case; often Father Rydzyk or other radio presenters just give over the air to the listeners. After they finish, even the most extreme statements are greeted with the presenter’s ‘thank you for your opinion’. Antisemitism of the radio’s listeners is not an effect of 14 years of Rydzyk’s activities, he merely gave people the microphone and reassured them that those opinions were not incompatible with being a good Catholic. Rydzyk and his media are only the tip of an iceberg that the Polish Church prefers to ignore as any questions about the roots of the antisemitism among its congregants may cast some unfavourable light upon Christianity itself.<sup>27</sup>

Thus the problems with Radio Maryja and its director are only symptoms of two illnesses that trouble Polish society at large – namely xenophobia and antisemitism, and the Church is not immune to them either. Also, as embarrassing as the radio may be for the Catholic intellectuals and some Church officials, its success and an army of supporters cannot be ignored. As a result the radio station with all its controversial input is tolerated and allowed autonomy. Those who dislike the situation comfort themselves with thoughts that only old ladies listen to it. Those old ladies are ridiculed in the media as ‘woolly berets of Father Rydzyk’. People who enjoy such jokes fail to see in those old ladies some 3 million strong electorate. Some sociologists also argue that it was the establishment’s fault that it ignored the problem of the disenfranchisement of those women in the public domain. Polish elites and

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<sup>25</sup> *Gazeta Wyborcza*, 235: 8 Oct. 2002, pp. 17-18.

<sup>26</sup> P. Semka, ‘Porozmawiajmy o Radiu Maryja’, *Rzeczpospolita*, 300: 27 Dec. 2002, p. A7.

<sup>27</sup> See chapter X: Religious roots of antisemitism.



feminists do not know how to communicate to those older, religious women who in many aspects (though would never admit it) share the feminist agenda (equal pay, more respect for women, eradication of violence towards women, even a more prominent role in the Church). Father Rydzyk would never gather their support, if his radio was not the only institution that shows and gives back respect to ordinary Polish women.<sup>28</sup> The elites saw what their negligence can cost. Though in the EU referendum in 2004 this electorate failed to stop Poland's accession, we had a taste of its influence. Until the last moment the pro-EU block feared the effects of the anti-European Union campaign led by the right-wing parties and eagerly supported by Radio Maryja and *Nasz Dziennik*.

It is true that the estimated 3 million<sup>29</sup> of the station's listeners are older, mostly women, uneducated and impoverished. This group by sheer numbers gives the station its strong position. However, it enjoys also the support from more affluent circles. I have already mentioned the symbiosis between the station and some bishops. Such mutually beneficial relations are also enjoyed by some of the right-wing politicians. The political right in Poland is very much divided and the momentum of Solidarity, under the umbrella of which some of the right-wing politicians established their credentials, has never been regained in the democratic Poland. Without unity some of the right-wing smaller factions have been unelectable, but these politicians have been saved from obscurity by Radio Maryja and *Nasz Dziennik*. Though Rydzyk keeps denying that the station supports any political party, by giving Marian Krzaklewski and later LPR (League of Polish Families) the air he fathered their success at the ballot.<sup>30</sup> To the political commentators it is a known 'secret' that the 'Father Director' in exchange for publicity demands from his pet politicians unquestioned obedience. Those who treated Rydzyk as a tool and ignored him after elections, soon learned that being in his bad books can translate into political failure.

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<sup>28</sup> L. Ostalska, 'Wizjonerki', *Gazeta Wyborcza*, *Wysokie Obcasy*, 25 Dec. 2006, see also: K. Leszczyńska, A. Kościńska (eds), *Kobiety i religie*, (Kraków, 2006).

<sup>29</sup> The media and commentators usually refer to the 3 million estimate, while some claim that the radio has only 1,5 million listeners. The latest survey cites 1 million as the number of listeners of Radio Maryja, about 2% of national audience and 360,000 viewers of TV Trwam about 0.17% of national audience. The survey was carried out by an advertising agency Heureka for Radio TOK, but I cannot comment on the representative value of this poll. Since some of the pilgrimages and rallies organised by the Radio attract 200,000 people, in my view the number of 1 million audience of Radio Maryja is underestimated. According to the same survey both TV Trwam and Radio Maryja attract predominately women (67% of the audience), people in their 50s and older (86%) and those with elementary education (54%). Cited after: *Gazeta Wyborcza*, 162: 13 July 2007, p. 6.

<sup>30</sup> See chapter XI: Politics.

Another group that backs Rydzyk's media is formed by nationalistic intellectuals and scholars or individuals who want to pass as such. In my work I made a point of citing the titles of the newspaper's contributors. Undoubtedly, the fact that so many articles are signed by professors and doctors, gives the newspaper more credit in the eyes of its readers. On the other hand, the historians that publish in *Nasz Dziennik*, are marginalized by Polish academia, so for them the newspaper is a great chance to publicize their research. The same authors broadcast their essays on Radio Maryja or are invited as commentators. Hence, their views reach out further than the readership of *Nasz Dziennik*.

Finally, Rydzyk's financial backers make up the most important group of his supporters. Rydzyk's entrepreneurial talents and the contributions from devoted listeners' modest pensions would have never financed his numerous projects. Very little is known about the financial part of his media enterprise due to the taxation law on religious institutions (the radio station is formally owned by the Redemptorists). Nevertheless, the recent scandal regarding one of Rydzyk's backers sheds some light on the matter. A businessman from Uruguay who is also a Polish Diaspora leader there was reportedly making large donations to the radio station. As reported by media the businessman who posed as an Auschwitz survivor in fact is suspected to have been a Nazi collaborator.<sup>31</sup>

Thus, as I tried to demonstrate, the inner circle of Rydzyk's media phenomenon is distant from the army of its rather provincial supporters. Professors and young politicians who are fluent in foreign languages find confirmation of their views in the nationalistic media. By education, profession and economic status these people belong to the Polish elites. This no doubt is an embarrassment for the more liberal and pro-western Polish elites, hence they often attempt to diminish the significance of those nationalistic elites by ridiculing and ignoring them. In my opinion this attitude led to such a great demand for media where nationalistic views could be freely expressed. Ironically, the liberal elites might have had some hand in Rydzyk's success.

The 'Father Director' from the onset of his radio project had a grand plan in mind – setting up media complex promoting 'Polish and Catholic values'. The launch

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<sup>31</sup> W. Czuchnowski, 'Kobyłański pisze, MSZ odwołuje', *Gazeta Wyborcza*, 72: 26 Mar. 2007, p. 5; W. Czuchnowski, 'IPN o Kobyłańskim', *Gazeta Wyborcza*, 69: 22 Mar. 2007, p. 7; M. Lizut, 'Czy Kobyłański kręci polską dyplomacją', *Gazeta Wyborcza*, 27: 1 Feb. 2007, p. 5; 'IPN zamknął sprawę Kobyłańskiego', *Gazeta Wyborcza*, 26: 31 Jan. 2007, p. 5.



of *Nasz Dziennik* newspaper in 1998 was a great step in bringing this idea to life. Interestingly, the title is only unofficially linked to the person of director of Radio Maryja. Officially Father Rydzyk does not have any position on the editorial board. However, the links between the station and the newspaper are clear. The two promote each other, something that got the radio station in trouble with the regulatory committee. Father Rydzyk and the station get great coverage in *Nasz Dziennik* and if necessary the newspaper is ready to defend the two. Also, the mysterious role of Rydzyk in founding the newspaper has been exposed in the so called ‘money in plastic carrier bags’ controversy.<sup>32</sup> This ambiguous financial dealing might be one explanation why Rydzyk stayed out of heading the newspaper. On the other hand, it might have been a strategic move, creating an impression of the newspaper’s independence.

The newspaper is published by ‘Spes’ Publishers, located in the Loretan Sisters convent in Rembertów, a small town near Warsaw. The newspaper’s offices are also located there, unusually for a daily. It is unknown who owns ‘Spes’ Publishers.<sup>33</sup> *Nasz Dziennik*’s circulation number is also something of a mystery. Since *Nasz Dziennik* does not publish commercial advertisements, it does not belong to Komisja Kontroli Nakładu [Committee of Circulation Control], an organisation that monitors the circulation. Hence as Prof. Maciej Mrozowski from the Department of Journalism and Political Science, University of Warsaw declared: ‘No media specialist will take on a job of estimating the circulation of *Nasz Dziennik* since a very important form of its distribution is the passing on of issues between the readers.’<sup>34</sup> Also, we have to remember that some of the articles are aired on Radio Maryja. In addition, *Nasz Dziennik* has a website<sup>35</sup> that offers its readers free access to the archive. This is very generous as other dailies offer shortened articles or request payment for making the archive available. *Katalog Mediów Polskich*<sup>36</sup> published by Ośrodek Badań Prasoznawczych, Jagiellonian University estimates the circulation of

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<sup>32</sup> ‘Pytanie o finanse Radia Maryja’, *Gazeta Wyborcza*, 276: 27 Nov. 2002, p.2 ; D. Czołgowski, J. Piotrowski, ‘Zbiórka na kolebkę’, *Duży Format*, 20 in *Gazeta Wyborcza*, 126: 31 May 2004, p.17.

<sup>33</sup> It is unclear where the money to launch the paper came from, today the editor in chief of *Nasz Dziennik*, Ewa Sołowiej, is the sole owner of ‘Spes’ which brings an estimate of 1 million złoty revenue. However, it is questioned that Sołowiej, former secretary of Rydzyk, is the real owner of ‘Spes’, see: K. Piskala, T. Potkaj, *W imię ojca. Fenomen Tadeusza Rydzyka*, (Axel Springer Polska: Warsaw, 2007), p. 115.

<sup>34</sup> J. Cieśla, ‘Czyj jest *Nasz Dziennik*’, *Polityka*, 38: 18 Oct. 2004, pp. 24-26.

<sup>35</sup> [www.naszdziennik.pl/](http://www.naszdziennik.pl/)

<sup>36</sup> [http://www.obp.pl/01-polish/katalog\\_pl.htm](http://www.obp.pl/01-polish/katalog_pl.htm) and S. Dziki (ed.), *Katalog Mediów Polskich*, (Kraków, 1995-2006).

*Nasz Dziennik* around 180,000 copies. By comparison the leader among the dailies, *Gazeta Wyborcza* reaches a circulation of on average 560,000, which on weekends rises up to 1 million. The newspapers in Poland do not have a Sunday edition, the Saturday edition is the weekend one. As seen in the example of *Gazeta Wyborcza* the weekend edition has a greater circulation than the working day one. *Nasz Dziennik*'s weekend edition offers in rotation gardening, culinary or childcare pull-outs. This attracts the reader who is not looking for the news in the paper and who on weekdays does not buy any title. Taking into account greater weekend circulation and the informal one among readers we could expect that on weekends the newspaper may have about 300,000 readers. This is a great slice of the publishing cake. Still, even the average circulation figures make *Nasz Dziennik* the third most popular daily, behind *Gazeta Wyborcza* and *Rzeczpospolita*. In the last three years the Polish publishing market has seen the arrival of a 'gutter press', as the tabloids are known in Poland, titles such as *Fakt* with its intrusive covers of private lives of Polish celebrities. In my opinion this would not have affected the readership of the three dailies significantly as the 'gutter press' attracts mainly three groups: those who would not have picked any other title, young people for whom celebrity culture is very important and 'cover story buyers' – those who pick up the newspaper only when it covers a story on a person they are interested in.

In order to understand the success and phenomenon of *Nasz Dziennik* on the publishing market we ought to look back at how this market was formed. Also, we have to understand why other dailies or religious or even right-wing periodicals have not occupied the niche in the market that *Nasz Dziennik* so successfully claimed for itself.

*Nasz Dziennik*, launched in 1998, is a daily newspaper of an estimated weekday circulation of 180,000 copies. Its editors mark their goal as 'to promote Christian values and the centuries old Polish history and culture.' By comparison, *Nasza Polska* a weekly, which supports 'right-independent political ideas', published since 1995, has a circulation of about 80,000 copies. Other regular publications with an orientation similar to *Nasz Dziennik*'s agenda include: *Głos*<sup>37</sup>, *Najwyższy Czas*<sup>38</sup>

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<sup>37</sup> 'Catholic-national' weekly, no data on circulation, launched in 1978 as an underground publication of Komitet Obrony Robotników, soon became a publication of a faction gathered around Antoni Maciarewicz, a right-wing politician.

<sup>38</sup> A 'conservative-liberal' weekly, exists since 1990, circulation not known, an informal publication of Unia Polityki Realnej under the leadership of the eccentric Janusz Korwin-Mikke.



and *Tygodnik Solidarność*<sup>39</sup>. These four newspapers have existed on the publishing market longer than *Nasz Dziennik*, but even such a historically significant publication as *Tygodnik Solidarność* has not achieved what *Nasz Dziennik* has. None of these newspapers became a national daily with a high circulation and uniting the readership of people with broadly defined right-wing political views. The question is whether the fact that *Nasz Dziennik* achieved the above is due to its merits or the inability of other titles to appeal to broader readership. In my view it is the latter. The titles above, though right-wing, present too narrow a scope of views and are a forum not just of one party but often of one politician. In addition, *Nasz Dziennik* does not compete with the religious publications, as most of them are weeklies or monthlies and rarely comment on political issues and current affairs.

We also need to notice the success of *Nasz Dziennik* as national daily, after all many national and local titles launched in the early 1990s had a very short lifespan. Financial backing is crucial in such survival, but so is the fine tuning with the demands of the publishing market. *Nasz Dziennik* was launched long after the press boom of 1989-1991 when the market was flooded with new titles.<sup>40</sup> Many new ventures went unnoticed by readers in the deluge of new publications. In 1998 *Nasz Dziennik* did not have this problem, also it got free publicity from Radio Maryja. Above all *Nasz Dziennik* continues being in tune with the demands and expectations of its readers.

*Nasz Dziennik* is supposed to promote Roman Catholic values, but by no means can it be called a Church newspaper, as it has no Church assistant editor. *Nasz Dziennik* has emerged from the nationalistic ethos of which religion constitutes a great part, but is rather a newspaper of a political group than of a religious one as religious topics tend to be treated here in a rather shallow way and take up on average 2 pages out of 16 or more in total; at times it devotes one third of the issue to religious matters. Religious themes in *Nasz Dziennik* include: saints' biographies, prayers, meditations on the rosary and ethical discussions. Often *Nasz Dziennik* publishes a series of articles on parenting in Catholicism, how to protect teenagers from religious

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<sup>39</sup> A weekly of NSZZ "*Solidarność*", average circulation 70,000 copies, exists since 1980 its first chief editor was Tadeusz Mazowiecki, resumed in 1989 but has taken a national-Catholic direction. The authors of *Zamiast procesu* mark out *Tygodnik Solidarność* as less radical and rabid than the other four publications. See: S. Kowalski, M. Tulli, *Zamiast procesu. Raport o mowie nienawiści*, (Warsaw, 2003).

<sup>40</sup> For an overview on the media market in 1990s see: Z. Bajka, 'Rynek mediów w Polsce', in: Z. Bauer, E. Chudziński, (eds) *Dziennikarstwo i Świat Mediów*, (Kraków, 2000).

sects or it promotes the pro-life campaign. The paper allocates a lot of space to current affairs and the economy, but it is not meant for professionals. For example it does not include stock market information or professional economic analysis, as do *Gazeta Wyborcza* and *Rzeczpospolita*. The modern history of Poland is another important topic for *Nasz Dziennik*; special emphasis is put on Polish martyrdom and heroic events of the past. The antisemitic material can be found mainly in long essays written by right-wing historians: Dr Andrzej Leszek Szczesniak, Prof. Jerzy Robert Nowak, Prof. Iwo Pogonowski and Dr Marek Chodakiewicz. Editorials and readers' letters echo the views put forward in those essays.

Although *Nasz Dziennik* is careful to present itself as a reliable source and one which bases its articles on professional research and analysis, it is clear that the newspaper is meant to appeal to wider masses. As I said earlier the readership of *Nasz Dziennik* is formed mainly by a less educated section of Polish society. Even the articles written by academics avoid over-intellectualising the topics in favour of a simple, clear message. In terms of the language the newspaper (and for that matter Radio Maryja) is careful to match it to the language used by its readers.<sup>41</sup> The language of the articles is often very emotive which supports the demagogical rhetoric of 'us versus them' and 'moral values versus spiritual decay'. Divisive and stereotyping speech is repeatedly underlined by mockery and humour on the verge of bad taste. Over the years the language the newspaper uses when writing about or attacking 'the enemies of Poland and its traditional values' got bolder, more vulgar and ferocious. For the rhetoric about the Jews the Jedwabne debate was undoubtedly a watershed in terms of the change in tone and ferocity of arguments. However, I would list two other factors to account for the increase in vulgarity. One more general, over past ten years Polish and international media broke many taboos and reached new milestones in terms of what is considered acceptable. The competition in the media market means that the bolder the content and language the more likely is the programme going to be noticed. This also affects the press. More specifically, *Nasz*

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<sup>41</sup> Interestingly we can compare it to a similar technique adopted by the Salvation Army in its literature, as it also was keen to adopt the vernacular of the audience it wished to reach see: D. Winston, 'All the World's a Stage: the Performed Religion of the Salvation Army, 1880-1920' in: S. M. Hoover, L. Schofield Clark (eds.), *Practicing Religion in the Age of Media. Exploration in Media, Religion, and Culture*, (New York, 2002), p. 119. Further, the class-identified mode of communication was an important key to the success of the pre-war, right-wing religious media see: chapter XII.



*Dziennik* became a powerful newspaper with a substantial readership which is viewed as an important electorate. Politicians, not only the right-wing ones but increasingly those closer to the centre of political scene, are in need of *Nasz Dziennik*'s support. This means that the newspaper has its supporters in the political circles, at times not only in Parliament but also in the government. Thus, *Nasz Dziennik* can be less cautious about the use of words.

Finally, as promoting Catholic values *Nasz Dziennik* is recommended to the listeners of Radio Maryja as speaking with 'our voice'. Many issues of the newspaper include reports on Radio Maryja and Father Rydzyk's activities: celebrations, pilgrimages and services. Those articles are illustrated by photographs of Rydzyk receiving flowers from children, talking to the congregants; the sympathisers of the Radio are shown touched by those speeches or deep in prayer. *Nasz Dziennik* publishes pages of letters from listeners from around the world expressing their support and gratitude to the Radio. This only confirms that the newspaper is part of a successful media group.

## Chapter I

### Antisemitism:

The myth of Jewish otherness as justification of discrimination and violence

Antisemitism is a term that encompasses many definitions,<sup>1</sup> which in turn lead to conflicting theories explaining this phenomenon. In a great simplification antisemitism can be defined as hostility towards Jews based on ethnic and/or religious prejudice. Inevitably, such a definition partially puts the blame for antisemitism on the Jews, as it assumes that the Jews attract prejudice because of being ethnically different and because of adhering to religious beliefs not shared by the majority. Such interpretation led some Jews, particularly in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, to believe that if they marry out and change religion the prejudice against them would cease. Despite their hopes for emancipation from prejudice, blond, fair skinned Christians of Jewish origin, who were avid German patriots, did not escape Nazi persecutions. Other theories focused not on the ‘natural’ Jewish traits that marked them out as a source of antisemitism, but on the role Jews played in society. Marxism saw causes of antisemitism in the class struggle – the Jew was rightly attacked for his participation in capitalist exploitation and swindle.<sup>2</sup> However, Jews who totally embraced Marxism found themselves being the first victims of the system they strived to build because...they were Jews.<sup>3</sup>

The main problem in defining antisemitism stems from the fact that it actually describes a whole spectrum of attitudes and that the phenomenon can be analysed on different levels: sociological, psychological, historical or cultural. As Shulamit Volkov

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<sup>1</sup> A. S. Lindemann, *Esau's tears. Modern Anti-Semitism and the rise of the Jews*, (Cambridge, 1997) – this work provides a good overview of many antisemitic themes that reoccur in modern history, however its main thesis is controversial as it nears dangerously to a view that Jews provoke antisemitism, among other things, due to being talented and successful; R. Wistrich, *Between redemption and perdition. Modern anti-Semitism and Jewish identity*, (London, 1990); J. Katz, *From Prejudice to Destruction*, (Cambridge, Mass., 1980); P. Lendvai, *Anti-Semitism in Eastern Europe*, (London, 1972); A. Hertzberg, *The French Enlightenment and the Jews*, (New York, 1968).

<sup>2</sup> For an interesting discussion on Marx's antisemitic views see: H. Maccoby, *Antisemitism and modernity. Innovation and continuity*, (Abingdon, 2006), pp. 63-73.

<sup>3</sup> B. Pinkus, *The Jews of the Soviet Union: The History of a National Minority*, (Cambridge, 1988); J. Schatz, *The Generation. The Rise and Fall of the Jewish Communists of Poland*, (Berkeley and Oxford, 1991).



pointed out antisemitism can form a part of a much broader cultural code.<sup>4</sup> Also, antisemitism evolved over centuries and depended on a variety of historical circumstances. Trying to find one definition to describe this variety of attitudes and their circumstances is as if we looked at the rainbow and defined it as being only red. Scholars aware of this problem tried to compartmentalise different types of antisemitism and to define each type separately. Halina Datner-Śpiwak when analysing the results of the survey on antisemitism in Poland in 1992 defined two types of this phenomenon: 'traditional/religious' and 'modern/political'.<sup>5</sup> She saw the genesis of 'modern' antisemitism in the French Revolution and its main ingredient in a conviction that Jews have too much influence over different arenas of public life. 'Traditional' antisemitism stems mainly from religious hostility linked to the conviction that Jews are to be blamed for the deicide.

We may question whether dividing antisemitism into religious, modern, fascist, political, and so forth, really helps us to define the phenomenon. More likely the division helps us to see in what kind of social circumstances antisemitism occurs. Besides, the multitude of arenas 'infected' by antisemitism suggests more universal reasons behind it. However, those who try to find universal laws behind different types of antisemitism, may in this search conclude that antisemitism is a hostile attitude toward the Other, namely it is a specific term describing only a type of xenophobia. From a sociological perspective, similar blueprints of group behaviour may be behind antisemitism and xenophobia. However, historically antisemitism is viewed as a special phenomenon, because of its intensity and persistence observed over the centuries. Yet again, as the Western historiography becomes more aware of the discrimination and suffering experienced by different groups: Blacks, women, children or gays, the historical uniqueness of antisemitism becomes slightly blurred.

Because of the problems discussed above I would propose that the working definition of antisemitism for the purpose of this study takes into account the following:

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<sup>4</sup> S. Volkov, 'Anti-Semitism as a Cultural Code: Reflections on History and Historiography of Anti-Semitism in Imperial Germany', *Yearbook of the Leo Beck Institute*, 23 (1978), pp. 25-46.

<sup>5</sup> H. Datner-Śpiwak, 'Struktura i wyznaczniki postaw antysemitów', in: I. Krzemiński (ed.), *Czy Polacy są antysemitami ?*, (Warsaw, 1996), p. 32.

1. When identifying the causes of antisemitism:
  - The causes cannot be assumed 'natural' traits of the Jews
  - The causes cannot be assumed 'natural' traits of groups which express antisemitic views
  - The causes can be connected to sociological and historical circumstances, as well as group psychology
2. An explanation of the roots of antisemitism expressed by a particular group should, at least to some degree, explain the roots of antisemitism of an individual forming a part of this group
3. The definition cannot assume randomness in the choice of the Jews as victims of hatred.
4. Antisemitism has to be treated as a distinctive<sup>6</sup> phenomenon.

Racist theories justified hostility towards the Jews by their inherent, 'natural' traits. For example Feliks Koneczny, Polish nationalistic ideologue, before World War II wrote that Jews were a product of a civilization entirely alien to the European one. Moreover, their morality was corrupted by the teaching of the Talmud.<sup>7</sup> The Jew was subjected to ideological hatred because he was a Jew. Jacob Katz phrased it: 'I regard the very presence of the unique Jewish community among the other nations as the stimulus to the animosity directed at them.'<sup>8</sup> The 'Jewish' cause of antisemitism is often eagerly embraced in some Jewish religious circles which understand Jews as set apart because of their religion. In other words Jews are hated because of the Torah, because God has chosen them.<sup>9</sup> This line of argument is open to many criticisms; for one it does not successfully explain prejudice against secular Jews. Also it assumes that all antisemites are religiously motivated, a claim that cannot be maintained.

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<sup>6</sup> By this I do not mean that this phenomenon cannot be duplicated. I understand antisemitism as distinctive from xenophobia, hostility towards strangers based on fear of the unknown. However, chimerical myths (see page 35) can be formed on other groups. Currently we can observe formation of such chimerical myths towards Muslims. Yet, it remains to be seen whether Islamophobia will become a phenomenon embellished in so many chimerical myths as antisemitism.

<sup>7</sup> F. Koneczny, *Cywilizacja żydowska*, (London, 1974).

<sup>8</sup> J. Katz, *From Prejudice to Destruction*, (Cambridge, Mass., 1980), p. 322.

<sup>9</sup> D. Prager, J. Telushkin, *Why the Jews?*, (New York, 2003) – this is not a scholarly work, which illustrates well this point of view.



On the other hand we have arguments suggesting that antisemitism is rooted in the ‘natural’ traits of some nations that are supposedly known for antisemitism. We hear that ‘only Germans could organise such systematic killings’ or that ‘Poles (or Ukrainians) suck antisemitism with their mothers’ milk’. Such views, often used by those who experienced antisemitism in those countries, serve as ‘comfort blankets’. They intend to convince the victim that he/she escaped antisemitism when leaving those countries; antisemitism not being a speciality of the Americans or the English is safely locked up in the ‘old world’. Such attitudes only avoid serious enquiry and perpetrate prejudice.

Hannah Arendt, looking for the roots of antisemitism in modern history, pointed out that antisemitism reached a peak level when Jews had lost all public positions and influences, and had only their wealth left.<sup>10</sup> Political weakness of the Jews left them more exposed to the hatred motivated by the jealousy over their material status. Paradoxically, equating Jews with other groups increased the discrimination towards them.<sup>11</sup> In those circumstances their otherness, here marked by affluence, was more visible. Arendt pointed to the historical condition for growing antisemitism, particularly in 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century. However, when in Nazi Germany antisemitism escalated, it appealed to the deeply rooted prejudice which predated political changes of 19<sup>th</sup> century. Here we may ask: Is it possible at all to give causes for antisemitism that would be universal for its different outbursts throughout history? Are we more likely to be faced with the snowball effect of causes and prejudices?

We may try to seek answers to this question in a more sociological or anthropological approach. When Shulamit Volkov wrote about antisemitism in the Imperial Germany she pointed out that antisemitism was part and package of a broader thought system – a cultural code for antimodernism. Jews became a symbol and then a

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<sup>10</sup> H. Arendt, *Korzenie totalitaryzmu*, (Warsaw, 1989), p. 10.

<sup>11</sup> A similar situation happened in inter-war Poland; ‘Ironically, once Jews had finally achieved equal civil rights, they found themselves immediately confronted with new legislation that sought to undermine or strip them of those rights’, see: S. Rudnicki, ‘Anti-Jewish Legislation in Interwar Poland’, in R. Blobaum (ed.), *Antisemitism and its opponents in modern Poland*, (Ithaca and London, 2005), pp. 148-171 and introduction p. 11.

scapegoat for all that was new, modern and threatened the status-quo.<sup>12</sup> Jews provided the focus, it was much easier to attack them rather than intangible modernity.

Gavin I. Langmuir analysed laws governing the attitudes of the 'in-group' towards the 'out-group' – strangers or those who are perceived as outsiders. What marked out the strangers were: religion, surname, place where one lived, behaviour, economical and legal status. It is desirable when those markers of difference/strangeness are underlined by physical differences, however it is of a secondary importance.<sup>13</sup> This is an important qualification as interpreting antisemitism as a type of a racist attitude suggests, that the main cause of prejudice were the physical/ethnic differences of the persecuted group.<sup>14</sup> Langmuir, however demonstrates the array of factors behind the formation of a prejudice.<sup>15</sup>

According to Langmuir's indications it is the case that Jews have many differentiating markers besides, in some cases, the ethnic/physical differences. We can point to markers of: religion, customs, behaviour, culture, surnames and first names, although not all Jews would be described with so many markers. Thus, does it mean that an assimilated, secular Jew does not face antisemitism? Certainly on the street an Orthodox Jew is more likely to be abused and become a victim of violence. However, an assimilated Jew, even when lacking instantly recognisable, differentiating markers, can still be discriminated by association made between this individual and the larger group that one feels hostile towards. The fact that a Jew without obvious markers that make him stand out from the majority is treated as if he still possesses all of them, is the outcome of

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<sup>12</sup> Volkov sees the scapegoating as part of the cultural code model, though the latter to her is more general and also applicable to the times of stability, see: S. Volkov, 'Readjusting Cultural Codes: Reflections on Anti-Semitism and Anti-Zionism', *The Journal of Israeli History*, 25/1 (Mar. 2006), pp. 51-62.

<sup>13</sup> G. I. Langmuir, 'Toward a Definition of Antisemitism', in: H. Fein (ed.), *The Persisting Question. Sociological and social contexts of modern antisemitism*, (New York, 1987), p.115 and G. I. Langmuir, *Toward a Definition of Antisemitism*, (Los Angeles, 1990), ch. 14.

<sup>14</sup> Of course it is a stereotypical way of thinking to suggest that all Jews look similar.

<sup>15</sup> I happened to observe a sociological phenomenon that confirms Langmuir's treatment of physical differences as being of secondary importance. In an English boarding school about ten percent of students from Asia formed a separate group, and despite some efforts of the school, they were not well integrated with the majority of English students. Their different behaviour, accent, sense of humour and interests posed a barrier to integrate with the majority. Daughters of Asian immigrants who were brought up in England had no problem with integrating, despite the fact that they shared physical traits with the group of outsiders. Interestingly, the situation of white foreign students was similar to that of the separated Asian group, although their integration was eased as they adopted interests of the majority group. This example, confirms that physical/racial differences can be less important than other, more subtle, differentiating factors.



the associations and prejudice that the very identification of someone as a Jew awakens. 'Modern' antisemitic arguments grew out of those 'traditional' ones, although some rhetoric and contents changed;<sup>16</sup> accusations of poisoning the wells and the host profanation were replaced, although not entirely, by accusations of controlling world politics and finance. This modern rhetoric would not have appeared without the myth that preceded it, one that considers the Jew as the ultimate Other (or as some wish to specify the 'threatening Other'<sup>17</sup>). This myth like a snowball gathered new layers of tropes throughout history. In many ways that animosity, accumulated over centuries, fuels itself regardless what real Jews are doing. In other words, the real Jews and their actions have very little impact on the myth created around them, unless of course their behaviour confirms it. For example the fact that thousands of Jews in Israel, Argentina or Ukraine live in poverty does not correct the antisemitic trope that all Jews are rich, while the presence of a few Jews in world finance fuels the myth. Thus, in many respects antisemitic myth and rhetoric evolve in a virtual world of their own.

If one group is discriminated or even attacked by another we can speak about a conflict. A question may be asked what is the conflict about? René Girard posed this question when analysing archetypal and historical conflict groups. His philosophical system looks at actions of groups and individuals and identifies 'mimetic desire' as the root of those conflicts.

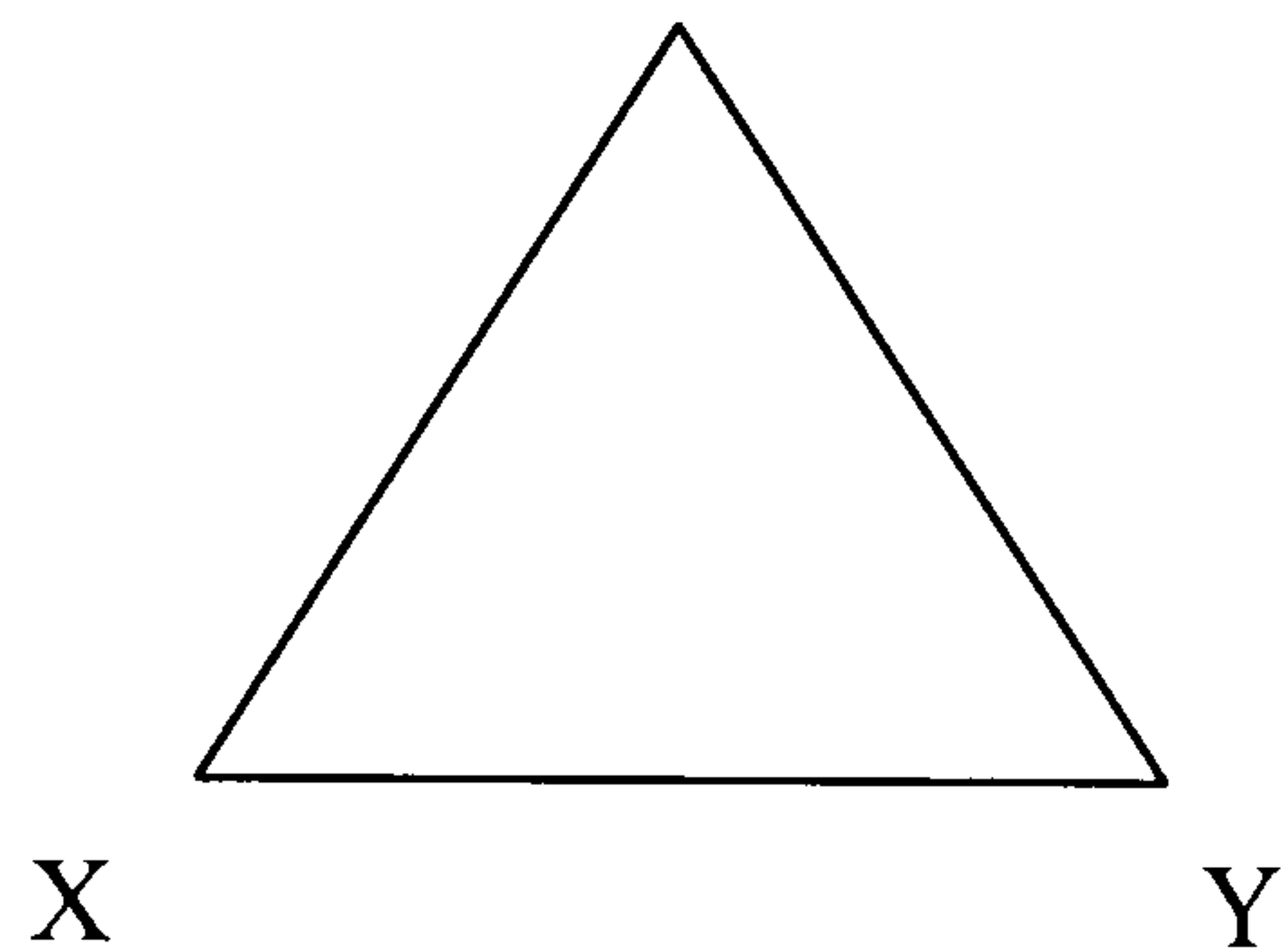
In relations with each other we are influenced by the desires to own what others have or by being or even looking like someone we admire. Schematically it can be represented as follows (with X and Y representing 2 sides competing with each other in the mimetic conflict):

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<sup>16</sup> 'Although at some level the medieval prejudice still operates in the common perception. The archaic picture of the Jews which endures in the minds of the people in the Polish provinces has a clear supernatural dimension. The myth is supposed to explain the origin of the group, its role in society, its fate. The gospel endowed the Jews with supernatural powers and put them in the sphere of sacrum. As depicted by the respondents, they had features which were evaluated ambivalently: the Jews were dangerous, but their existence was necessary. The image was bipolar: the group was endowed with satanic qualities on the one hand, while there was also a clearly articulated conception of saintliness on the other – and both with the same respondents in different contexts of the conversation': A. Cała, *The Image of the Jew in Polish Folk Culture*, (Jerusalem, 1995), p. 150.

<sup>17</sup> J. Michlic, *Poland's Threatening Other: the Image of the Jew from 1880 to the Present*, (London, 2006).

### OBJECT OF DESIRE



An example of positive mimetic desire is competing in sport. On the other hand mimetic desire can become a basis for violence as we ‘desire what others desire’.<sup>18</sup> In the instance when the object of desire becomes unattainable individuals become frustrated and more prone to violently expressing this dissatisfaction.<sup>19</sup> The love/hate dynamic of celebrity culture illustrates it best; people get fascinated with celebrities because of the lifestyle they lead yet the public tends to hate those celebrities at the same time. Of course desire not always leads to hatred or violence as some individuals are able to control their basic emotions. On the other hand, sometimes rivals forget very quickly about the common object of desire and engage in conflict that fuels itself even after the object of desire becomes totally irrelevant<sup>20</sup> (long-term family feuds are the best example of such conflict).

Each individual functions in a web of mimetic desire ‘triangles’. In a sense everybody is a competitor and we all compete with each other. This in turn interferes with the individual’s sense of belonging to any group. Thus ‘a fundamental problem for any society is to channel mimetic desire, and arising from it violence, felt by individuals.’<sup>21</sup> In order to integrate itself the ‘inner-group’ strengthens its distinctive markers, for example own customs, and at the same time isolates the less integrated individuals or minority groups. Violence erupts occasionally, when isolation and discrimination do not channel sufficiently the negative emotions of the ‘inner-group’. In such situations the ‘inner-group’ chooses the least integrated individuals as its victims.

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<sup>18</sup> M. Kociuba, ‘Kulturotwórcza rola przemocy w koncepcjach René Girarda’, *Nowa Krytyka*, 9 (1998), pp. 137-157.

<sup>19</sup> R. Girard, *Dawna droga, którą kroczyli ludzie niegodziwi*, (Warsaw, 1992), p. 20 ff.

<sup>20</sup> A. Urbańska, ‘Koncepcja mimesis René Girarda’, *Etnografia Polska*, XLI (1997), pp. 21-45.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid.



This is commonly referred to as scapegoating. However, the crucial difference from the proverbial understanding of the term and the Girard's theory is the issue of how the victim was chosen. The proverbial scapegoat is chosen haphazardly in a violent frenzy.<sup>22</sup> Girard's scapegoat 'is identified because of its otherness'<sup>23</sup> while 'the mob aims to cleanse itself from the individuals who undermine its unity'.<sup>24</sup> Of course perpetrators often exaggerate the otherness of the victim, even to the extent of creating a myth about it. Girard just as Langmuir looks for criteria of 'otherness' in cultural, religious and physical differences. The proverbial perception assumes that the scapegoat is weak; however Girard postulates 'the polarity of persecution'. The targets of violence can be lepers as well as the healthy ones, pariahs as well as kings, thus those most different from the average. It has to be stressed that, in the post-violence narratives, the 'otherness' of the victim is not used as the justification of violence. To put it succinctly the murderers do not boast 'we killed them because they were different' but 'they were justly punished for their crime'. The perpetrators have to be absolutely convinced about the 'guilt' of the scapegoat. Thus, they form a myth about the victim's culpability; the myth reflects reality of the given time. It might be an accusation that female healers had contacts with Satan or the Jews poisoned the wells.

Mimetic desire not only helps to explain the violent behaviour of a group, but it can be used to understand that of an individual. We may question whether explaining antisemitism with the help of this paradigm rids antisemitism of its uniqueness. I think that it depends on how we understand this uniqueness. From a historical perspective the consequences of antisemitism – reoccurring pogroms, and especially the Holocaust – are examples of extreme bestiality. But even on a historical level can we say that the Holocaust should be put in a special place, above the genocide on Armenians or Kurds, ethnic cleansings in Congo, Yugoslavia or Sudan?

In my opinion antisemitism is not unique because of the Holocaust and centuries of persecutions of the Jews, but because of an unprecedented myth that surrounds this

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<sup>22</sup> Many scholars, among them Hannah Arendt reject the idea that Jews are a scapegoat, mainly because it assumes that if Jews were not there at the time of violence someone else would have been persecuted instead. However, one could say that intuitively Arendt touches on the mimetic desire mechanism and its consequences. She actually refers to 'hatred motivated by jealousy over Jews' affluence in the 19<sup>th</sup> century'. H. Arendt, *Korzenie totalitaryzmu*, (Warsaw, 1989), p. 10 ff.

<sup>23</sup> R. Girard, *Dawna droga, którą kroczyli ludzie niegodziwi*, (Warsaw, 1992), p. 20 ff.

<sup>24</sup> R. Girard, *Kozioł ofiarny*, (Łódź, 1987), p. 26.

minority throughout history. This myth stemmed from the need to justify the hostility and to divest guilt after the violence. Langumir calls this myth 'chimera' because as opposed to xenophobia it is not formed on realistic stereotypes, but abstract, fantastical ones, which cannot really be observed hence they cannot be disproved either.<sup>25</sup> Realistic stereotypes such as saying that a particular group is known for laziness can be challenged and verified.<sup>26</sup> However, accusations about use of magic or contacts with Satan cannot be defended or disproved. Realistic xenophobic prejudices give some degree of concession to an individual who for example when observed as hardworking can be seen as an exemption from the rule. Again, chimerical prejudice does not give an individual who is a part of an attacked group such a chance.

Chimerical accusations were not only used against the Jews, but also against witches, Muslims, lepers<sup>27</sup> and other minority groups, however it can be argued that Jews were more prone to chimerical accusations due to being differentiated by more markers of otherness that determine hostility towards them. We may question whether today 'chimerical' prejudice exists and whether it can be found in the 'modern' antisemitism? I would argue that the international Zionist conspiracy theory is the modern equivalent of accusations that Jews had contacts with Satan or used magic. The complicated and untraceable story line of this Jewish conspiracy resembles that of science-fiction novels.<sup>28</sup> We do not know precisely who is involved in the conspiracy and, what is more important, any Jew can be accused of conspiring and at the same time is unable to disprove his participation in the secret conspiracy.

In light of all the problems raised above, for the purpose of this work I define **antisemitism** as:

hostility towards the Jews caused by mimetic desire of an individual and/or a group, which the aggressors justify by the otherness and the alleged guilt of the

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<sup>25</sup> G. I. Langmuir, 'Toward a Definition of Antisemitism' in: H. Fein (ed.), *The Persisting Question...*, p. 117; G. I. Langmuir, *History, Religion and Antisemitism*, (London and New York, 1990), p. 297.

<sup>26</sup> I would argue that even realistic prejudice which is deeply rooted in common consciousness is extremely difficult to correct.

<sup>27</sup> M. Pilaszek, 'The Witch-Hunts in Poland: 16<sup>th</sup>-18<sup>th</sup> Centuries', *Acta Poloniae Historica*, 86 (2002), pp. 103-132. Also compare with the work of D. Nirenberg who researches the violence against Jews, Muslims and lepers and sees it as part of systemic violence that was used to bring stability in the times of crisis. D. Nirenberg, *Communities of Violence. Persecution of Minorities in the Middle Ages*, (Princeton, 1996).

<sup>28</sup> In fact the Jewish conspiracy myth emerged at the time when conspiracies of 'dark forces' were a popular literary theme in Gothic or romantic fiction.



Jews. The perpetual affirmation about this guilt builds a negative myth about the Jew\*, which becomes another stimulus for discrimination and aggression.

\*a single construct because the myth identifies the individual with the alleged guilt of the entire group

In this work I am going to focus on answering the question: ‘What is the object of mimetic desire that stimulates those using hate speech and antisemitic rhetoric in *Nasz Dziennik*?’ Unlike other, more general, works I do not focus much on the markers of otherness of the Jews. To put it succinctly I do not ask the Jew: ‘Why are you a victim?’ I turn to the aggressor, in this case, the one that expresses prejudice and hatred in media, and ask:

- Why does he attack the Jews?
- Does he want something that the Jews have or are alleged to have?
- Are the Jews an obstacle on the way to the aggressor’s object of desire?
- What is the object of mimetic desire coveted by those expressing antisemitic prejudice?

At this point I would like to stress that the Jews, as an actual group, are only passively involved in the conflict. Most of the time they may even be unaware that they are a side in any conflict. This is mainly because those who attack the Jews with antisemitic discourse, refer to the mythical concept of the Jew and the Jews as a group.

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In order to analyse antisemitism in contemporary Poland, first we ought to present (albeit briefly) its scale and the sociological, as well as historical background, to this phenomenon. At the same time I would like to point to the use of the scapegoat mechanism as an interpretative tool in the historiography of antisemitism in Poland.<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>29</sup> See also: M. Woźniak, ‘Między antropologią a historią: mechanizm kozła ofiarnego w narracji historycznej’, *Kultura i Historia*, 1 (July 2001) on <http://www.kulturaihistoria.umcs.lublin.pl/nr1/artykuly>

This is so to demonstrate that the theoretical model presented in the first part of this chapter has already been applied by the leading scholars in the field of antisemitism in Poland. Despite the fact that they rely more on the common interpretation of the scapegoat mechanism and do not refer to the work of Girard, there is a wealth of historical works that demonstrate that Jews become victims of violence in times of economic and/or political crisis.

The most recent research on the subject of antisemitism in Poland shows that there is scarcely anything Polish, that is specific or even endemic, to 'Polish antisemitism', in terms of its rhetoric, especially in the case of modern antisemitism.<sup>30</sup> The most general feature of antisemitic rhetoric is the accusation that Jews conspire to control world politics and finance. Such accusations are neither new (vide *Protocols of the Elders of Zion*) nor unfamiliar elsewhere (as they echo outbursts of Hollywood stars and speeches of politicians in the Middle East).

Poland, as a country with a high percentage of the population being practicing Roman Catholics, is indeed an exceptional case in Europe.<sup>31</sup> In this context one could expect that the traditional type of antisemitism, blaming Jews for deicide, would be specific to Poland because it is a 'religious country'. However, those Poles who support such accusations form only 11.6% of the population, by comparison to the 27% of the proponents of 'modern/political' antisemitism.<sup>32</sup> On the other hand, it is a worrying sign that 'traditional/religious' antisemitism has not decreased over past 10 years, contrary to sociological predictions.

The deep attachment of Poles to their religion means that many are adamant that Catholicism should have a place even in the public and political life. This by contrast with other societies, which are more secular, may seem as over zealous and intolerant. The statement: 'It is right that there is a cross in the Parliament, rather than any other religious or secular symbol. We live in a Catholic country. The cross is our Polish

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<sup>30</sup> I. Krzemiński (ed.), *Antysemityzm w Polsce i na Ukrainie, raport z badań*, (Warsaw, 2004). R. Modras, *Kościół katolicki i antysemityzm w Polsce w latach 1933-1939*, (Kraków, 2004), p. 17.

<sup>31</sup> The survey carried out by Ośrodek Sondaży Społecznych Instytutu Statystyki Kościoła Katolickiego in 1998 showed that 68.5 % of Poles are believing Roman Catholics, in addition 16.7% are deeply religious; 53.5% regularly engage in religious practices see: <http://www.iskk.ecclesia.org.pl/badanie.htm> By comparison in 1995 66% of the French declared to be Catholic, 21% practicing Catholics and only 10% regularly attending mass, see: P. Kasznia, 'Wiara jako kaprys', *Rzeczpospolita*, 199: 27 Aug. 1996, p. 20.

<sup>32</sup> I. Krzemiński (ed.), *Antysemityzm w Polsce i na Ukrainie, raport z badań*, (Warsaw, 2004), p. 30.



symbol' was supported by 86% of farmers, 48% of intelligentsia and 75% of pupils and students.<sup>33</sup> This may seem like intolerant towards other religious groups, but the lack of significant religious minorities in Poland since the war means that those Poles who answered this question affirmatively never had a chance to develop religious sensitivities through interfaith contacts. I think such statements reflect more on traditionalism and attachment to Catholicism than deliberate discrimination of other religions.

The attitudes of Polish society towards ethnic minorities or even more generally towards 'strangers' pose a separate problem. Here we can actually talk about specifically Polish attitudes of distrust and resentment towards nations ethnically distant from the Poles. Interestingly, a survey carried by OBOP<sup>34</sup> showed that Poles are most prejudiced towards the Roma (the newspaper reporting it used the term Gypsies) and the Arabs (the term Arab used in the survey should be understood as also possibly denoting Muslim, as those are often used interchangeably by most Poles).<sup>35</sup> The survey was conducted before the events of 9/11 and the attitude towards the Arabs cannot be explained by a difficult history shared by both groups, as it is in case of antisemitism. Thus, it is important to see antisemitism in Poland in a broader context of general mistrust and prejudice towards various ethnic groups.

What can be also said about Poles that differentiates them from Western European societies is the lack of political correctness in public life, which even goes as far as opposition to the concept. Poles in the public and private sphere cherish their newly gained freedom of speech and are over-sensitive about any attempts to infringe this freedom.<sup>36</sup> For the nation that still remembers censorship and the 'new speech' of the Communist regime, political correctness is seen as a 'Western form of censorship'.

On the other hand, recently even in Western Europe the attitudes seem to shift towards the rejection of political correctness, especially in the context of discussions about Israel and antisemitism. As Claudio Magris pointed out:

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<sup>33</sup> CEBOS report from Feb. 2001, as published in *Gazeta Wyborcza*, 125: 31 May 2002, p. 18.

<sup>34</sup> Ośrodek Badań Opinii Publicznej [Center for Research on Public Opinion].

<sup>35</sup> A. Szostkiewicz, K. Szymborski, 'Raport: Rasa kłamie?', *Polityka*, 11: 16 Mar. 2002, pp. 3-6.

<sup>36</sup> Recently this has been observed in the backlash reaction towards the new president, Lech Kaczyński, and his pompous self-importance and threats of taking legal actions against those who made jokes about him.



In our culture something ambiguous happens, there sneaks in a concession. Some years ago antisemitism was not even a view to be debated with, racist-extremists could only be condemned or looked down with pity, but their insane ideas were not taken into account, their views were foreign to the common consciousness. Thanks to that they did not exist politically and socially [...] Today however, even in the well meaning debates, conducted to stamp out racist violence, creeps in the acceptance of this violence, it is taken into account as a choice, a wrong one, but worthy of a discussion.<sup>37</sup>

In the past few years, even across the democratic world, antisemitism has been given a platform, most often in the form of anti-Zionism, of which eager embracement by leftist circles gave some legitimacy to holding antisemitic views in general.<sup>38</sup> Such change in common international sensitivities also affects Poland, and especially the nationalistic milieu. In *Nasz Dziennik* writers are delighted to report these Western breaches of political correctness and quote them in support of their antisemitic views.<sup>39</sup> This reaction is strengthened by the fact that in Poland there is no and has never been, a ‘common consciousness’ condemning racism and antisemitism. Individuals and various organisations condemn such attitudes, but those attitudes are not commonly rejected. In Poland a politician who is open about his homophobic, racist or antisemitic views not only is not ostracised, but rarely faces popular protests. Sadly this lack of opposition to such views becomes more common in the old democracies.

It is easier to explain and understand cultural, racial or religious clashes when a majority faces a substantial minority group. In Poland where the number of Jews is almost negligible strong antisemitic attitudes of 27% of the population are much harder to comprehend. According to the MSWiA (the Ministry of Interior and Administration)

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<sup>37</sup> C. Magris, ‘Targowisko tolerancji’, *Gazeta Wyborcza*, 263: 10-11 Nov. 2001, pp. 8-10.

<sup>38</sup> P. Ignaski, B. Kosmin (eds.), *A New Antisemitism? Dabating Judeophobia in 21<sup>st</sup> century Britain*, (London, 2003).

<sup>39</sup> The newspaper showed admiration for the struggle of German MP, Martin Hohman who said that Jews are to be blamed for Bolshevism as much as Germans for Nazism in E. Polak-Palkiewicz, ‘Sztuka oporu’, *Nasz Dziennik*, 276: 27 Nov. 2003, p. 11. It agreed with Ken Livingstone that Israelis were conducting policies of ‘ethnic cleansing’ in ‘Szaron do więzienia’, *Nasz Dziennik*, 54: 5-6 Mar. 2005, p. 6.



there are 8,000-10,000 Jews living in Poland.<sup>40</sup> By comparison the Belarusian minority is about 200,000-300,000 strong, however unlike the Jews they are not accused of acting to damage Poland financially and politically. Hence, the term ‘antisemitism without the Jews’ is applied to the situation in Poland after the Holocaust. Interestingly in the survey carried out by TNS-OBOP<sup>41</sup> in the answers to the question: ‘What groups in our society have too much influence over the matters of our country?’ Jews were pointed out by only 0.8% (40% pointed out the politicians, 26% the rich, 11% the Church). However, to the question: ‘Does any minority living in Poland have too much influence over the matters of our country?’ Jews were mentioned by 19% and Germans by 10% (other minorities by 2%, while 28% answered that there is no such group and 44% did not know). Professor Antoni Sulek<sup>42</sup> commented on the results: ‘In the day-to-day circumstances Poles do not think about ethnic groups in categories of privileged and or deprived groups [...] Poles are not bothered about “the Jewish Power”. They act contrary to the stereotype of the Pole as obsessively preoccupied with the Jew. However, if we introduce the ethnic context, many people remind themselves about the Jews [...] Stereotype about the Jew is not so well buried in our minds and gets activated by one word [“minority”]’.<sup>43</sup> Such reactions confirm that we deal with the ‘chimerical’ antisemitism which is not verified by reality. It is very telling that prejudice about the Jews dominates over that about the Germans (300,000-500,000 in Poland), even despite the witch-hunt against the Germans for allegedly ‘wanting to buy the Polish land’. In fact, over the past ten years the negative attitudes towards the Germans decreased; in 1992 as much as 26% of respondents thought that the presence of the German minority in Poland is damaging for the country while in 2002 the number of Poles agreeing with this view dropped to 10%.<sup>44</sup> Thus, in 2002 Jews overtook the Germans and in the eyes of Poles became the most threatening

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<sup>40</sup> Today according to the Union of Jewish Religious Communities there are about 8,000 affiliated Jews. In the 2002 census only 1055 people declared themselves to be Jewish. Data according to the Ministry of Interior and Administration: <http://www.mswia.gov.pl/index.php?dzial=61&id=37#zydzi>. Various Jewish organisations in Poland estimate the number of people of Jewish origin as 15,000-20,000.

<sup>41</sup> Survey carried out in Apr. 2002 by Antoni Sulek, published in *Gazeta Wyborcza*, 172: 25 July 2002, pp. 1, 3.

<sup>42</sup> Institute of Sociology, Warsaw University.

<sup>43</sup> *Gazeta Wyborcza*, 172: 25 July 2002, pp. 1,3.

<sup>44</sup> I. Krzemiński, *Czy Polacy...* and I. Krzemiński (ed.), *Antysemityzm w Polsce i na Ukrainie...*, p. 212.

minority with 14% sharing this view.<sup>45</sup> Because of the Nazi occupation and the Holocaust this result is shocking as it shows the extent of prejudice against the Jews. Also, if we put the attitudes of Poles towards Jews in the context of the last 30 years, we observe that in 1975 the negative attitudes towards the Jews were shared by 41%; this number fell to 21% in 1989.<sup>46</sup> In 1992 17% of respondents showed modern/political antisemitic views<sup>47</sup> and this number increased to 27% in 2002.<sup>48</sup> These dynamic shifts in attitudes testify to troubled Polish-Jewish relations and a number of unsolved conflicts over the common past that only recently started being addressed and have not yet given way to the healing process of reconciliation.

The image of the Jew as an enemy of Poland and ‘Polishness’ has deep roots in Polish consciousness. Before World War II there were about 3 million Jews living in Poland, 10% of the population.<sup>49</sup> The presence of such a significant ethnic/religious minority can potentially lead to conflicts with the ethnic/religious majority. However, as is usually the case, so it was in Poland that it was not the minority that caused most of the problems, but the inept policies of the state regarding this group. In the late 19<sup>th</sup> century ‘assimilated Jews were welcomed by the Polish educated classes, whereas traditional Jews were viewed as an exotic tribe that had an undeniable right to live in its own way. Only in the 1880s did blatant antisemitism gain a foothold in the censored Warsaw press. It was virulent enough but limited itself mainly to economic struggle and moral slander and did not manage to influence mainstream public opinion.’<sup>50</sup> However, even for those among the elites who welcomed assimilation, it ‘presumed an inherent superiority of Polish or “European” culture over “Asiatic” Jewish customs [...] Even the most liberal Poles rarely stopped to question exactly why Jews should adopt Polish culture in the first place.’<sup>51</sup>

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<sup>45</sup> However, in comparison with the survey from 1992 the general percentage of people feeling threatened by the minorities is lower. Ibid.

<sup>46</sup> Surveys by OBOP analysed in F. Ryszka, A. Jasińska-Kania, ‘Antysemityzm polski – szkic do opisu i diagnozy’, *Państwo i Kultura Polityczna*, IX (1990), p. 30.

<sup>47</sup> I. Krzemiński (ed.), *Czy Polacy są antysemitami?*, (Warsaw, 1996).

<sup>48</sup> I. Krzemiński (ed.), *Antysemityzm w Polsce i na Ukrainie...*, p. 30.

<sup>49</sup> W. Roszkowski, *Historia Polski 1914-2000*, (Warsaw, 2001), p. 32.

<sup>50</sup> J. Jedlicki, ‘Resisting the Wave: Intellectuals against Antisemitism in the Last Years of the “Polish Kingdom”’, in: R. Blobaum (ed.), *Antisemitism and...*, p. 61.

<sup>51</sup> T. R. Weeks, ‘Assimilation, Nationalism, Modernization, Antisemitism: Notes on Polish-Jewish Relations, 1855-1905’, in: R. Blobaum (ed.), *Antisemitism and...*, p. 33.



The policies of interwar governments, especially in the late 1930s were not encouraging integration, but introduced discriminatory legislations such as ban on the Sunday trade, and gradual ban on ritual slaughter.<sup>52</sup> Often the so called ‘Jewish question’ was an issue over-exaggerated for populist political needs. Pre-war Poland was very diverse, an amalgam of three partition areas and many ethnic groups, some with a not yet well defined identity. In Warsaw Poles constituted 64% of the citizens, while in Vilna and Lviv only just above half of the population. In the romanticised patriotic literature ‘Polishness’ was burning with a passionate flame in the hearts of the simplest peasants. This was the image projected by the educated elites. The reality was much more complex and less exalted; a simple peasant was foremost and often exclusively a local patriot. In response to the census question about his nationality he defined himself as ‘tutejszy’ [from here].<sup>53</sup> Even the rural population was often bilingual, because of the partitions. In addition, many ethnic Poles were efficient in Yiddish, sufficiently to conduct business with Jews. While at home Polish remained the mother tongue it was a language with many foreign influences, differentiating depending on the area. The cultural horizon of a peasant was often confined to his *powiat* [~county, administrative unit] while his assessment of the partitions was determined by personal economic circumstances. In particular, the inhabitants of the borderlands held an ambiguous attitude towards ‘Polishness’ as for generations they lived under the influence of different cultures, and often had a problem pointing out the dearest one.<sup>54</sup>

In 1919 Poland was in need of a reconstruction plan and a consequent realisation of this vision, however not only the economy and the government needed rebuilding, the national identity called for a revival and re-evaluation. Some similarities with Poland then can be seen in Lithuania or Ukraine after the breakdown of the Soviet Union. While some citizens longed for great national (or even nationalistic) revival others were keener to maintain tight contacts with Russia.

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<sup>52</sup> See more in chapter XII on *Mały Dziennik*.

<sup>53</sup> The answers given in the national censuses in 1921 and 1931 in the Polesie region, see: C. Brzoza, *Polska w czasach niepodległości i II wojny światowej 1918-1945*, in *Wielka Historia Polski* (series), vol IX, p. 51.

<sup>54</sup> A.V. Prusin, *Nationalizing a Borderland: War, Ethnicity, and Anti-Jewish Violence in East Galicia, 1914-1920*, (Tuscaloosa, 2005).

In the 1920s Poland faced a crucial question: 'Should the state be nationalistic or multinational or even federal<sup>55</sup>?' The *Endecja* (National Democrats) camp strongly opposed the multinational idea. Roman Dmowski in his nationalistic credo *Myśli nowoczesnego Polaka*<sup>56</sup> painted a vision of national identity largely based on self-determination defined by a negative attitude towards the neighbouring nations. 'The Modern Pole' by definition ought to be anti-German, anti-Ukrainian and anti-Jewish. Dmowski postulated a specific 'sociological Darwinism' in order to ensure the existence and development of the Polish nation, Poles needed to 'Polonise' Belarusians. Jews, on the other hand, were denied a possibility of assimilation as they were the 'enemies of the reconstruction of Polish government'.<sup>57</sup> Dmowski explained this hostility as a consequence of the Jews being part of an entirely different 'ancient civilisation, resistant to assimilation'.<sup>58</sup> Andrzej Mencwel saw the roots of Dmowski's ideology in his fascination with German and Prussian imperialism. In the face of Poland's weakness imperialism could only be practiced on her minorities. In essence Dmowski preached 'zoological' nationalism [nowoczesna zoologia narodowa], that advised attacking the weak before they become stronger and attack us.<sup>59</sup> Interestingly, Dmowski did not at first equate Polishness with Catholicism, this was his later opportunistic move,<sup>60</sup> which resulted in a nationalistic trope that prevails in antisemitic discourse today. Dmowski and *Endecja* ideologues in general preached the ideology of 'othering'.<sup>61</sup> They identified threats posed by the Other, primarily Jews, against which their policies were claimed to offer protection.

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<sup>55</sup> J. Piłsudski held a civic nationalism vision of a federalist Polish state linked to independent states of Ukraine, Belarus and Lithuania.

<sup>56</sup> R. Dmowski, *Myśli nowoczesnego Polaka*, (Wrocław, 1996) first published in 1902 as a series of articles in *Przegląd Wszechpolski*.

<sup>57</sup> R. Dmowski, *Polityka polska i odbudowa państwa polskiego. Wybór*, (New York, 1988), vol. I and II., also see: A. Polonsky 'Roman Dmowski and Italian Fascism', in: R. Bullen, H. Pogge von Strandtmann, A. Polonsky (eds.), *Ideas into Politics: Aspects of European History 1880-1950*, (London, 1984), pp. 130-146.

<sup>58</sup> K. Kawalec, *Roman Dmowski 1864-1939*, (Wrocław, 2002), p. 277.

<sup>59</sup> A. Mencwel, 'Gwiazda na starej chałupie (2)', *Gazeta Wyborcza*, 144: 22-23 June 2002.

<sup>60</sup> Writing in 1902 Dmowski was very pragmatic and critical of the Romantic/spiritual nationalism: R. Dmowski, *Myśli nowoczesnego Polaka*, (Wrocław, 1996); K. Kawalec, *Roman Dmowski...; Endecja* very quickly overcame difficulty of reconciling racism with the universal message of Christianity and soon in its propaganda urged that a good Catholic must be an antisemite, see: O. Bergmann, *Narodowa Demokracja wobec problematyki żydowskiej w latach 1918-1929*, (Poznań, 1998), p. 176.

<sup>61</sup> Term used by David Campbell in: D. Campbell, *Writing Security. United States Foreign Policy and the Politics of Identity*, (Manchester, 1992).



In inter-war Poland, officially Jews were citizens with equal rights. However, they were still being perceived as pariahs; the more their political or economical position differed from this stereotype, the more they were subjected to hostility.<sup>62</sup> Despite the international obligations and pressures independent Poland refused full freedom to her Jewish citizens. Many anti-Jewish laws initiated by the partitionists remained in effect until 1931.<sup>63</sup> In 1919 the *kehila* was stripped of its functions as part of the regional administration. Later the legislation forbidding trade on Sundays discriminated against Jewish shop owners and traders, as did the widespread movement to boycott Jewish shops and businesses, even those run in partnership with ethnic Poles. In this boycott slogans urging the ‘real Pole’ to buy goods only from ‘his own’ group [‘swój do swego po swoje’] we can identify a conflict based on mimetic desire. Free market competition did not satisfy the hunger of some for greater profits. Jews were seen as an obstacle on the way to greater wealth hence they fell under attack; what started as aggressive propaganda gradually grew into physical violence. In other words, the emerging Polish middle class let out its frustration over limited access to commerce and free professions. Secondly, Jews were not perceived as contributors to the national economy. On the contrary their Otherness was linked to the idea that they were robbing Poland and the Poles of their wealth.<sup>64</sup> In the late 1930s the populist antisemitic ideology found support among the policy makers resulting in plans to stop entirely ritual slaughter and introduce *numerus nullus* at the universities, preventing Jews completely from gaining a higher education. At the outbreak of the war Poland was firmly on the way to being a nationalistic state persecuting its minorities.

The revival of the right-wing nationalistic ideology in Poland in the 1990s bears strong resemblance to the pre-war situation. After post-Communists and liberals failed to provide a comprehensive recovery plan for the nascent free market economy a niche was

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<sup>62</sup> A. Hertz, *Sprawa antysemityzmu, Wiedza i Życie*, 10 (Oct. 1934), pp. 723-734.

<sup>63</sup> For example: a ban imposed on the composition of civil or commercial documents in Hebrew or Yiddish, rabbinical students did not share the same legal exemption of military service as their counterparts in the Roman Catholic seminaries, there was a law allowing rejection of telegrams in Hebrew and Yiddish even if written in Latin alphabet etc. see: S. Rudnicki, ‘Anti-Jewish Legislation in Interwar Poland’, in: R. Blobaum (ed.), *Antisemitism and...*, p. 157.

<sup>64</sup> This is of course a much older trope of antisemitic discourse, going back to at least Early Modern history of Poland and attacks on Jewish arendars and tavern owners see: H. Levine, *Economic Origins of Antisemitism: Poland and Its Jews in the Early Modern Period*, (New Haven, 1991); See also discussion in *Mały Dziennik* in chapter XII.

created for populists who provided a simple vision ‘get out foreign businesses and enemies of Poland and the future will be bright’. The populists launched campaigns against foreign capital, supermarkets, Jews, masons and EU dictates. This scapegoat discourse was meant to provide an outlet for brewing social crisis.

The fact that populism is thriving is not surprising given the difficult social and economic current situation in Poland. However, the revival of nationalistic ideology, directly building on *Endecja*’s legacy, is hard to comprehend after the Holocaust. It can be argued that antisemitism in Poland after the Holocaust is directly linked to the image of the Jew projected in the Polish psyche before, during and after the war. Sadly the image was and still is depicted through stereotypes and misunderstandings.

During World War II antisemitism did not decline despite the fact that Poles and Jews faced the same enemy – the Nazis.<sup>65</sup> Those whose Polish identity and world view before the war were strengthened by antisemitic ideology kept holding on to their convictions even when Jews were being methodically exterminated. Extreme right-wing underground pamphlets continued discussing the ‘Jewish questions’. However, there were people, such as Zofia Kossak-Szczucka<sup>66</sup> who wanted to see a resolution of the Jewish question in Poland, but who strongly opposed the Nazi atrocities and who risked their own lives to save Jewish victims. Nevertheless, it has to be stressed that ‘righteous antisemites’ were exceptional individuals and their example cannot overshadow those antisemites for whom Catholic ethics never stood in the way of betraying a Jew in the face of deadly danger.<sup>67</sup>

After the Holocaust the general attitude of Poles towards Jews was very much influenced by the nation’s own trauma, loss of independence and the image of Poland as the ‘Christ of nations’. This meant that Poles did not perceive Jews as unique victims,

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<sup>65</sup> Of course Poland faced two enemies, the Nazis and the Soviets, however the latter one was seen as a lesser evil by the Jews and with the hindsight of how many of them managed to survive in the Soviet Union this was a correct assessment. To the Poles the Soviets were a more dangerous enemy and the loss of independence for 50 years has proven their assessment of the danger to be correct.

<sup>66</sup> Zofia Kossak-Szczucka, writer and activist, in 1942 she appealed to the Poles to save the Jews and co-founded Żegota – the Council to Aid the Jews (Rada Pomocy Żydom), in 1943 arrested and sent to Auschwitz, she survived the war and there is some evidence that she maintained her antisemitic views. See: Z. Kossak-Szczucka, *Z otchłani*, (Rome, 1946).

<sup>67</sup> For a critical discussion of other cases of antisemites helping Jews see: D. Libionka, ‘Antisemitism, Anti-Judaism, and the Polish Catholic Clergy during the Second World War, 1939-1945’, in R. Blobaum (ed.), *Antisemitism and...*, pp. 250-255.



this title they reserved for themselves. In addition, Poles might have felt guilty of passive participation in the ritual of violence, of being ‘bystanders’ of the crime. Some may argue that this guilt might have prompted justification of own behaviour by creating the myth of the Jew victim and at the same time perpetrator. Hence, the return to the medieval chimerical accusation of ritual murder in Kraków on 11 August 1945, Kielce in 1946 and other places. Even the Holocaust has not weakened the medieval myth. In fact, the Holocaust was incorporated in the myth justifying the pogroms after the war. This even made the myth about the Jew-perpetrator stronger as it incorporated the truth about the Holocaust and Jewish victimhood; Jews were weak after the ordeals in the Nazi camps (victim) thus they needed blood of Polish children to fortify themselves (perpetrator).<sup>68</sup> Those massacres show the disintegration of society and a deep erosion of moral values at the time. However, we must be extremely careful when pointing to the erosion of moral values after the war as a reason for pogroms. After all, it was never ordinary after the war to kill a fellow Pole; the same cannot be said about the Jewish victims. A more prosaic reason of anti-Jewish aggression was the conflict over the ‘former Jewish’ property. According to an eye-witness such reason was behind the murder of the Jews in Kańczuga on 31 March 1945, although the citizens of the town justified the murder by alleged collaboration with the NKVD of one out of the seven victims.<sup>69</sup> Why did some Poles specifically choose the Jews as the outlet for their economic or social frustration? Posing this question we expect that in the aftermath of the Holocaust society ought to have felt compassion towards the remnants of the Jewish population. However, the effect of the Holocaust was that it made Jews into the ultimate scapegoat, an easy target to pick. Hence, perhaps the ease in which in the time of post-war upheavals violence was channelled against the already familiar victim. The additional reason was that some Poles used the old antisemitic trope of Jewish responsibility for the Bolshevik revolution to channel their frustration against the Soviet occupier.

The accusations against the Jews about their collaboration with the Soviet security apparatus evolved into blaming Jews alone for the Stalinist crimes and the enforcement

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<sup>68</sup> J. T. Gross, *Fear: Anti-Semitism in Poland After Auschwitz. An Essay in Historical Interpretation*, (Princeton and Oxford, 2006); J. Michlic-Coren, ‘Anti-Jewish Violence in Poland, 1918-1939 and 1945-1947’, *Polin*, 13 (2000), pp. 34-61.

<sup>69</sup> W. Piecuch, ‘Wielka noc w Kańczudze’, *Gazeta Wyborcza*, 52: 2-3 Mar. 2002, pp. 17-19. For similar stories see J. T. Gross, *Fear...*

of the Communist regime. The myth of ‘Żydokomuna [Judeo-communism]’<sup>70</sup> was used to justify aggression towards Jewish survivors and at the same time helped to silence the guilt over the inaction during the Nazi occupation. However, we have to be extremely sensitive to the subtleties of the antisemitic discourse during the Communist regime. Often the word Jews referred to those in power. It was common that Polish Gentiles in high echelons of power, such as Bolesław Bierut or Stanisław Radkiewicz, were perceived as Jews. As Krystyna Kersten phrased it ‘not so much the Jew was the enemy but the enemy was the Jew’.<sup>71</sup> Also we have to bear in mind that the tensions between Poles and Jews were used by the Kremlin in a bid to control Polish political life.<sup>72</sup> During the ‘thaw’ of 1956 the myth of Żydokomuna was a convenient one for the Communist regime, which was eager to cleanse itself from the guilt for the Stalinist crimes of the security system.<sup>73</sup> As many scholars have pointed out, in Soviet satellite countries in the 1950s Jews were treated as members of a suspect minority; they were persecuted and used as scapegoats in order to hide the crimes and failures of the discredited regime.<sup>74</sup>

Once again the general social crisis has been appeased by channelling people’s frustration, this time towards the Jews in the high positions within the party. This time the old Judeo-Communism myth has been used by the Communists themselves to legitimise their own rule. The regime’s faults have been blamed on the Jews, thus ethnic-Poles cleansed themselves from the guilt of implementing Stalinism in Poland. The events of 1956 foretold those of 1968, however in the 1950s antisemitic attacks took a form of rumours and gossip<sup>75</sup> rather than an open and full-blown campaign of the late 1960s. The

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<sup>70</sup> See chapter VII: ‘Crimes...’, p. 146.

<sup>71</sup> K. Kersten, *Polacy, Żydzi, Komunizm. Anatomia półprawd 1939-68*, (Warsaw, 1992), p. 79.

<sup>72</sup> Ibid., p. 156.

<sup>73</sup> K. Kersten, *Polacy...* and also A. Paczkowski, *Pół wieku dziejów Polski*, (Warsaw, 1995), p. 369. See also: P. Machcewicz, *Polski rok 1956*, (Warsaw, 1993).

<sup>74</sup> P. Meyer, B. D. Weinryb, E. Duschinsky, N. Sylvain, *The Jews in the Soviet Satellites*, (Syracuse, 1953), p. 52.

<sup>75</sup> The grass-roots events of workers’ protests against the regime such as those of June 1956 in Poznań and those of October 1956 across Poland were free from antisemitic slogans. However, in Lower Silesia where many Jews were resettled after the war the events had an anti-Jewish character. At the higher party level in 1956 there was only one open public display of antisemitism in the speech of Zenon Nowak at the VII Plenum KC PZPR enlisting Party comrades of Jewish origin. The antisemitic speech is interpreted as an attempt to channel dissatisfaction of the masses with the regime towards the Jews in the party. About Nowak’s speech in W. Jedlicki, ‘ "Chamy" i "Żydzi" ’, *Kultura*, 12 (1962), pp. 3-41; see also: E. Makowski, *Poznański Czerwiec 1956, pierwszy bunt społeczeństwa w PRL*, (Poznań, 2006); W. Ratajczak (ed.), *Poznański Czerwiec ’56. Sens pamięci*, (Poznań, 2006).



Jews in the party, the real ones and perceived ones, were only moved to less prominent positions following the events of 1956.

In addition, the memory about the Holocaust was tampered with, and the Jews were remembered solely as Polish victims of Nazism. In this respect actions taken by officials agreed with general attitudes of the Poles who wanted to be perceived as special victims of the Nazi occupation, erased the memory of the Jewish victims of Nazism and the memory of their existence in Poland. The plaques under commemorative monuments did not refer specifically to Jews and virtually nothing was taught about Jews in Polish schools. What makes the picture even more complicated is the fact that this systematic forgetting was part of Soviet directives. Jews were also compelled to hide their Jewishness or even their Jewish origin. However, we can also argue that those who decided to stay in Poland after 1945 perceived themselves as Poles, and to them it was the greatest shock that in later years their, long thought to be irrelevant, Jewish origin should be thrown back in their faces.

March 1968 marked another stage in the development of antisemitic rhetoric in the most recent history of Poland. The 'anti-Zionist' witch-hunt became a powerful tool in resolving Communist Party conflicts at the higher level between the so-called old Stalinist clique and the younger group of ambitious apparatchiks from the 'back rows'. However, we should be careful about drawing the lines as many from the latter camp, the 'Partizans' were nothing but old Stalinists. Although it is true that most of the 'anti-Zionist' mass protests were carefully directed by the Partisans faction, it cannot be denied that the rhetoric resonated with some parts of society, especially the factory workers. Once again in the history of Poland, antisemitism became an outlet for social unrest and resentment towards the unchanging totalitarian regime. The causes and events of 'March 1968' are now well researched,<sup>76</sup> however their impact on the current antisemitic rhetoric is often overlooked. In the Polish consciousness 'March 1968' is equated with student repressions and perceived as a watershed in the history of anti-Communist struggle. Though the protests did not bring down the regime, they were a first step on the road to change. Just as in the case of the Holocaust memory, the memory about the persecutions

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<sup>76</sup> See especially the latest monograph by the IPN: K. Rokicki, S. Stępień (eds.), *Marzec 1968*, (Warsaw, 2004).

of the Jews during that time became shady if not completely erased. Interestingly the antisemitism of the Moczar<sup>77</sup> faction had a lot in common with the *Endecja*'s ideas of the 1930s while they also used Stalinist propaganda methods.<sup>78</sup> The 'Partisans' in 1968 acted similarly to Stronnictwo Narodowe in the 1930s which in its attack against the government used the 'Jewish motif' as the strongest propaganda asset.<sup>79</sup>

Further, the propaganda comparing Israeli actions in the Middle East to the Nazi methods, was another myth helping to erase problems of the guilt of the Holocaust bystander.<sup>80</sup> It was with such propaganda that the view was formed: 'Jews are evil so they deserved the Holocaust' (chronological problem of cause and result did not seem to be important in the formation of this view). However, we have to bear in mind that the Soviet and home propaganda did not create antisemites, the campaign was so successful at the lower echelons of the party because it appealed to already existing emotions and convictions. This was apparent in the eagerness with which some picked up the antisemitic mood and went beyond the call of duty to persecute the Jews.<sup>81</sup>

In addition, propaganda identifying Jews with the 'Red bourgeoisie' appealed to the general sense of social injustice felt by the Poles. According to M. Zaremba we can observe in the mass response to the 1968 propaganda a 'classic scapegoat syndrome. If the Jews who (allegedly) personified all evil were chased away, a significant improvement was expected'.<sup>82</sup> During the set-up rallies and demonstrations in support of the Party, people were most interested in the gossip such as the participation in the

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<sup>77</sup> Mieczysław Moczar, (real name Mikołaj Demko) member of KPP, in 1938-1939 imprisoned for his Communist activism, during the war member of the Soviet espionage and underground fighter, long standing member of the Central Committee of the Communist Party since 1944 and minister in various governments 1956-1976, president of ZBoWiD [Veterans Association] 1964-72, leader of the 'partisans' group in 1968 and proponent of nationalistic version of Communism in 1960s. See also: K. Lesiakowski, *Mieczysław Moczar "Mietek"*, (Warsaw, 1998).

<sup>78</sup> M. Głowiński, *Nowomowa po polsku*, (Warsaw, 1990), p. 63.

<sup>79</sup> K. Kersten, *Polacy, Żydzi, Komunizm...*, p. 162.

<sup>80</sup> M. B. Jarosz, *Marzec w prasie*, in M. Kula, P. Osęka, M. Zaremba, *Marzec 68. Trzydzieści lat później. Tom I referaty*, (Warsaw, 1998), p. 99.

<sup>81</sup> G. Sołtysiak, J. Stępień (eds.), *Marzec '68 między tragedią a podłością*, series: *PRL w dokumentach*, (Warsaw, 1999), pp. 363-366; K. Rokicki, S. Stępień (eds.), *Marzec 1968*, (Warsaw, 2004). See also the monograph published by the IPN: J. Eisler, *Polski rok 1968*, (Warsaw, 2006). For the European background of these events see: P. Gassert, D. Junker, C. Fink (eds.), *1968: The World Transformed*, (Cambridge, 1998).

<sup>82</sup> M. Zaremba, 'Biedni Polacy 68- społeczeństwo polskie wobec wydarzeń marcowych w świetle raportów KW i MSW dla kierownictwa PZPR', in *Marzec 68. Trzydzieści lat później*, p. 169.



student protests of the children of Party dignitaries.<sup>83</sup> The common people were eager to criticise the system, and repeating the antisemitic slogans criticising the Zionists in the party at least partially fulfilled this need.

Completely different were the roots of antisemitism among the 'second row' of the Party and the academics, these groups benefited most from the forced emigration of about 20,000 Jews. Suddenly, thanks to the antisemitic outrage jobs, flats, Party positions and university tenures became available. As J. Kochanowicz pointed out: 'The most shocking was the outburst of antisemitism, not only spontaneous but also of a cynical-pragmatic type, adopted by those who not really disliked the Jews, but saw a chance for a quick and easy promotion.'<sup>84</sup> Opportunism is not morally neutral; especially a member of the intelligentsia needed to justify his passiveness in the face of degradation of a dedicated Party member or a renowned academic. In order to restore normality, the scapegoat ritual demands an absolute conviction about the guilt of the victim. Thus, the opportunists had to believe in the antisemitic propaganda. Interestingly, after the March 1968 events the Communist Party saw a sudden increase of the membership. Possibly people were enticed by the opportunity of a quick promotion or equally they actually found Moczar group's nationalism appealing.

Polish historiography of March 1968 is abundant in statement such as 'Jews became scapegoats of the Moczar's faction'. However, the scapegoating theory has found even an application in the analysis of the documents, as J. Kosiewicz pointed out in the use of official documents from March 1968 'to examine the text from the perspective of the scapegoat and the mechanism of the scapegoating process meant to think about what is omitted in the text, rather than what we find in it'.<sup>85</sup>

To sum up, *Endecja's* ideology, the trauma of being victims of Nazi occupation as well as Holocaust bystanders, the taking over of Jewish property and the Communist antisemitic propaganda with its peak in 1968 – all contributed to the creation of the current myth about the Jew in the mass consciousness. This myth is so strong that the very word Jew in Polish unlocks negative correlations, even a child knows that if he does

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<sup>83</sup> Ibid., p.144 and G. Sołtysiak, J. Stępień (eds.), *Marzec '68 między tragedią a podłością*, (Warsaw, 1999), p. 194 in particular for the information about the workers' attitudes in the Szczecin shipyard.

<sup>84</sup> J. Kochanowicz, 'Marzec 1968 i życie intelektualne Uniwersytetu', in *Marzec 68. Trzydzieści lat później. Tom I referaty*, (Warsaw, 1998), p. 135.

<sup>85</sup> J. Kosiewicz, 'Zakłęte koło przemocy', *Przegląd Humanistyczny*, 8/9 (1989), p. 92.

not share a snack with friends he will be a 'Jew' or that what it means when he is reprimanded for 'rocking, (or eating or buttoning up) in the Jewish way' – denoting that whatever is improper and inappropriate is Jewish and vice versa. At the same time the factual knowledge about the Jewish history in Poland is very weak.<sup>86</sup> Stainlauf called it 'memory expelled',<sup>87</sup> while Girard also pointed to the 'erasing of the memory about the scapegoat', which is an important element in the struggle to confirm the 'ultimate truth'.<sup>88</sup> The myth about the Jew in its chimerical form, though modernized for the purpose of the contemporary rhetoric, is not empirically verifiable, hence it can survive even despite the lack of personal contacts with the Jews.

From the above overview we can observe a pattern of the use of the antisemitic myth in the last 80 years of Polish history. Although the myth about Jewish guilt and otherness is constantly present in the common consciousness, it is rephrased and adapted at a time of social crisis. Political and economic crisis encourage those who fight for power or to stay in power to appease the situation by identifying those guilty of the crisis. As shown above many prominent scholars referred to the scapegoat pattern when analyzing antisemitic campaigns of the 1930s, 1940s, 1950s and 1960s. Though the essence of the pattern of violence, as outlined by Girard is used in Polish historiography as an analytical tool, most of the scholars provide their own interpretations of the 'scapegoating ritual'. In most cases, scholars point to the struggle for power, legitimization of the totalitarian regime, appeasing of social crises as the context of choosing Jews as scapegoats. In my opinion, this analysis is correct as far as it identifies the immediate context and causes of a particular outburst of antisemitic, verbal or even physical, violence. However, political and economic crisis are only a trigger, they do not explain the undercurrents and long-term causes of antisemitic myth. Those range from religious and ethnic conflicts to historical events that have affected relations between Poles and Jews long before an analyzed outburst. I have already identified the issue surrounding the Holocaust remembrance, the specific competition of victims that encourages negative perception of the Jews. The myth of Żydokomuna is part of a more

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<sup>86</sup> Ibid., p. 81.

<sup>87</sup> M. C. Steinlauf, *Bondage to the dead, Poland and the Memory of the Holocaust*, (New York, 1997), p. 85.

<sup>88</sup> R. Girard, *Kozioł ofiarny*, (Łódź, 1987), ch. II and ch. V, p. 103.



general concept that Jews disseminate dangerous and immoral ideas. Finally, the most elusive of the long-term causes of antisemitism in the Polish context is the religious prejudice. Openly present in the campaigns of the 1930s, when Jewish morality, in particular the use of the Talmud, was attacked, the religious antisemitic arguments disappeared from the 'official' discourse during the 50 years of Communist rule. However, the pogroms which took place in the aftermath of the war and the research carried out in the 1980s by A. Cała<sup>89</sup> among peasants, show that even the most chimerical images of the Jews, with strong religious connotations, were still present in the common perception of Polish society.

Hence, in my analysis of antisemitic discourse in *Nasz Dziennik* I will be identifying immediate 'triggers' of particular outbursts of antisemitic rhetoric such as the current political situation or events in the Middle East. However, I will be most interested in identifying the long-term myths that underpin the current articles published in the newspaper. The juxtaposition of Girard's theory, largely based on analysis of patterns described in literature and primeval myths with the use of scapegoating theory in the historiography of modern antisemitism in Poland, proves the complexity of the historical context. Hence I will still use, as many scholars do, the scapegoating theory in order to understand immediate causes of surges in antisemitism in Poland in recent years. However, when looking for long-term causes behind the current antisemitic myth, I aim to verify what mimetic conflicts may stand behind its rhetoric, nevertheless I intend to be less rigid about relying on this theory as an analytical tool.

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<sup>89</sup>A. Cała, *The Image of the Jew in Polish Folk Culture*, (Jerusalem, 1995), p. 150.

## Chapter II

### Holocaust

Parallel Lives, Parallel History: Holocaust Themes in *Nasz Dziennik*.

Collective memory forms a vital role in the fashioning of national identity and as such has very little space for critical evaluation of one nation's history.<sup>1</sup> As Peter Novick put it: 'Collective memory simplifies; sees events from a single, committed perspective; is impatient with ambiguities of any kind; reduces events to mythic archetypes'.<sup>2</sup> Inevitably every nation has in its history those darker, shameful moments, but national identity has to be built on solid foundations of pride in national history and culture. Thus collective memory supports a positive image of a nation; it tries to justify atrocities committed by its own nation, blows out of proportion the importance of national achievements, while at the same time it belittles those of past enemies. When a nation constructs its self-image out of diversity it tries to draw a picture of unity, primarily by distancing itself from 'The Other'. Usually that 'Other' is a neighbouring nation or nations. If within a nation lives a smaller, distinctive group, by closeness it becomes the ultimate symbol of 'otherness'.

Up until 1939 Poland remained a complex mosaic of nations, religions and languages. This diversity at times led some to attempt to mark out and separate what was distinctively Polish from what was foreign, hence the Sarmatianism of the 17<sup>th</sup> and first half of the 18<sup>th</sup> century or Endecja's nationalism at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The ideologists of Endecja, F. Koneczny and R. Dmowski, with hints of admiration for the

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<sup>1</sup> Maurice Halbwachs, who in the 1930s pioneered the research on collective memory, famously said: 'It is...in society that [people] recall, recognize, and localise their memories'. M. Halbwachs, *On Collective Memory* (Chicago, 1992), p. 38. Halbwachs' research is still an important point of reference for modern scholars working in the field of collective memory. Among general sociological works on the topic I found Paul Connerton's, *How Societies Remember*, (Cambridge, 1989) most informative. Collective memory in the context of the Holocaust forms a separate discipline of research with its vast literature primarily discussing American (see P. Novick below) and Israeli experiences (Y. Zerubavel, *Recovered Roots: Collective Memory and the Making of Israeli National Tradition*, [Chicago, 1995]). In this category see also: James Young, *The Texture of Memory: Holocaust, memorials, and meaning*, (Yale, 1993). I found general works on collective memory and the Holocaust interesting though not immediately relevant to this work and focused more on the literature on the Polish collective remembrance of the Holocaust, finding the works of Iwona Irwin-Zarecka (see below) most insightful.



feared German culture, despised and belittled the 'Slavic element' seeing Ukrainians and Belarusians as material for Polish colonisation. However, it was the Jew that became the ultimate 'Other'. For them the Jew and his culture brought the greatest threat to the Polish national identity. Even those individuals among the liberal Polish intelligentsia, who saw Jewish assimilation as a possibility, 'conceived it as digestion of the alien element'.<sup>3</sup>

Polish collective memory is strongly influenced by self-centred messianism, a conviction of historical injustice inflicted on the nation, and by a sense of national martyrdom<sup>4</sup>. This is partially explained by the troubled history of Poland and existence of the nation in the shadow of powerful neighbours. Since the periods when Poland prospered were brief in her history, and even then not all the strata of society benefited from better times, Poles grew proud of all what their nation has endured over the centuries. School children learn about numerous crises that led Poland to loss of land and at times of independence, which in turn were followed by brief periods of national unity and sacrificial insurrections. Those bloody uprisings made the Poles proud of their heroism. As A. Bryk put it: 'Many contemporary Poles need a glorious yesterday as a dependable justification for a grey today. A defeated people lives by myths, clings to myths. Apologetic and martyrological versions of national history only mirror an incurable romantic despair. Honour seems to Poles the only reliable justification of their national existence.'<sup>5</sup>

So to this day Poles cultivate a self-image of themselves as a victim. Sacrifice and suffering agree with the Roman-Catholic cultural background of Poland, hence the messianic interpretation of the nation's history. In addition, Poles often saw themselves as Europe's defenders of the true faith, the bulwark of Christendom (*Antemurale christianitatis*), later of Roman Catholicism. Polish national pride is often expressed in religious terms. The national poet has famously interpreted Poland's non-existence on the

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<sup>2</sup> P. Novick, *The Holocaust and Collective Memory. The American Experience*, (London, 2000), p. 4.

<sup>3</sup> J. Jedlicki, 'Resisting the Wave: Intellectuals against Antisemitism in the Last Years of the "Polish Kingdom"', in: R. Blobaum (ed.), *Antisemitism and...*, p. 62.

<sup>4</sup> About messianic self-stereotype see: I. Krzemiński (ed.), *Czy Polacy są antysemitami?*, (Warsaw, 1996), p. 102.

<sup>5</sup> A. Bryk, 'The Hidden Complex of the Polish Mind. Polish-Jewish relations during the Holocaust', in A. Polonsky (ed.), *'My Brother's Keeper?' Recent Polish Debates on the Holocaust*, (London, 1990), p. 161.

map during the partition by calling her ‘the Christ of the nations’.<sup>6</sup> During the occupation and the Communist regime this phrase brought a bittersweet comfort to the tormented nation. Maybe Poland did not make the greatest contribution to the world’s economy, but it gave it something mystical, the expiatory suffering for all the world’s sins. Being a victim is not normally a source of pride, but being a messianic victim serves as a prop, helping the wounded Polish national pride to stand up tall.

For the Poles German occupation during World War II is associated with the greatest threat to their nationhood and with the suffering that has scarred three generations; for the generation growing up before the war it is the watershed dividing their life into ‘before’ and ‘after’ – so often elderly Poles refer nostalgically to ‘before the war’; it is the traumatic childhood for those growing up during the occupation while for those born after the war it is the direct reason for the hardship they faced in their childhood. For every Polish family the occupation meant loss of loved ones, ruined health and often loss of all possessions. Those who lived in the East lost their homeland. And collectively Poles lost their country. Though nominally still on the map, what Poland might have been if Hitler and Stalin never attacked became only an unfulfilled wish.

In parallel to those events that were traumatic to so many Poles, at the same time and in the same country, the methodical extermination of the Jews was taking place. What happened to the Poles and what happened to the Jews (including Poles-Jews<sup>7</sup>) run parallel. However, the suffering was not endured together, and physical barriers like ghetto walls can only be here a symbol of divisions on a more profound, emotional level.<sup>8</sup>

As Raphael Scharf pointed out, even before the war Jews and Poles lived ‘not together but nearby each other, on paralleled lines in accepted natural isolation’<sup>9</sup>, the majority of Poles did not feel any emotional bond with the Jews, neither with individuals

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<sup>6</sup> This metaphor was first used by Adam Mickiewicz in his play *Dziady* see: A. Mickiewicz, *Dzieła, t.III, Utwory dramatyczne*, (Warsaw, 1982), pp. 185–188. Also, see an article by B. Doport, ‘Polska - Chrystusem narodów?’, in: B. Doport (ed.), *Dziady Adama Mickiewicza, poemat – adaptacje – tradycje*, (Kraków, 1999), pp.70-92.

<sup>7</sup> I use the term Poles-Jews [Żydzi-Polacy] deliberately to denote the right of Jews who lived in Poland to be considered not only as Polish citizens, but also to stress their moral right to treat Poland as their own country, see also: S. Krajewski, *Poland and the Jews. Reflections of a Polish Polish Jew*, (Kraków, 2006).

<sup>8</sup> B. Engelking-Boni, ‘Psychological distance between Poles and Jews in Nazi-occupied Warsaw, 47-53, in J. Zimmerman (ed.), *Contested memories: Poles and Jews during the Holocaust and its aftermath*, (New Brunswick and London, 2003). See also accounts by a Pole who helped to save Jews and a Jewish survivor in: H. Grynberg, *Janek i Maria*, (Warsaw, 2006).

<sup>9</sup> R. F. Scharf, *Co mnie i tobie Polsko. Eseje bez uprzedzeń*, (Kraków, 1999), p. 198.



nor with the group/nation. In addition, propaganda spread by Endecja (the right-wing, nationalist party) especially regarding the economic rivalry, enticed its followers to treat the Jews as the Enemy. This attitude did not cease even when Jews were being exterminated by the Nazis. The right-wing underground press continued to discuss the 'Jewish question'.<sup>10</sup> Despite these factors, there were some righteous people ready to help the Jews during the occupation, while the majority was indifferent to their fate.<sup>11</sup> It is difficult to say whether in the public discourse those who stress the suffering of the ethnic Poles as equal or even greater than that of the Jews during the war want to justify this indifference or whether it is still this indifference that distorts their memory.

We should also ask what part did the Communist regime play in the distorting of the memory about the Jews? The result of communist ideology led to almost 50 years of universalising the Jewish suffering, of mentioning the Jews not as the main victim of Nazi crimes but as one of many, and finally of Polonizing the Jewish victims, especially visible in Auschwitz before 1989, suggesting that they did not die for being Jewish but for being Polish. Ironically, the Jews who before the war were boycotted, attacked by nationalistic youths, and not accepted as Poles, after their tragic death became Poles at the convenience of those in power. However, any blame put on the Communist teaching and propaganda has to be treated with extreme caution. After all, Poles generally have not trusted negative Communist propaganda about the Home Army or the 'friendly intervention' of the Soviets in 1939.

Another hypothesis that could explain why some Poles fail to acknowledge the Jewish suffering is that people tend to focus on their own problems and hardly see beyond them. Perhaps here we see a national case of the proverbial case that 'blood is thicker than water'. Iwona Irwin-Zarecka when referring to the perception of the Holocaust in Poland pointed out that 'when a loss is not recognized as a loss, grieving is not natural'. Jews are not mourned by Poles because they do not feature as a part of their

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<sup>10</sup> Right-wing publications such as *Szaniec* or *Walka* still portrayed Jews as benefiting from the war and harmful for Poland. See also: J. B. Michlic, *Poland's Threatening Other: the Image of the Jew from 1880 to the Present*, (Lincoln and London, 2006), p. 163.

<sup>11</sup> Teresa Prekerowa estimated that 160,000-360,000 Poles aided Jews out of 15 millions (1-2.5%) of adults capable of delivering such help (she excluded the prisoners, deported etc.). Her calculations are very cautious as she assumed that for every Jew hiding 2-3 Poles were involved, however often hiding even one person involved a complex network of rescuers. See: T. Prekerowa, 'The "Just" and the "Passive"', in: A. Polonsky (ed.), *'My Brother's Keeper?' ...*, pp. 72-80.

collective memory. They are excluded from the collective memory because they were excluded from the national family, before, during and after the Holocaust.<sup>12</sup> The recognition of the Jewish suffering and its inclusion in the Polish collective memory will only be possible once Poles rediscover Poland's Jewish heritage and recognise its value. The first part of the process began in the 1980s, though most of the Poles who took part in it, mainly members of the intelligentsia, would only discover the 'exotic Jew' – the one from the 'Fiddler on the Roof' and I. B. Singer's stories. The recognition of the Jews' positive role in Poland's history, culture and economy has not begun in the Polish public domain. I would seriously question a possibility of such process in the face of constant exclusion of Jews and Jewish heritage from the idea of Polishness. As long as the only role of Jews in Poland's history is seen as a negative one, as argued by the nationalistic circles and their media, Jews will continue to be treated as a problem not as brothers. Even without this negative campaign, in order for the Jews to be included in the Polish collective memory, Poles will need to deal first with the recognition of the less honourable chapters in their history and reflect on the role of the Western/Christian civilisation in making the Holocaust possible.<sup>13</sup>

The survey below and analysis of the Holocaust theme in *Nasz Dziennik* seek to shed some light on the complex issue of Polish remembrance of the extermination of the Jews. *Nasz Dziennik* is the only daily newspaper that devotes so much space and attention to the topics of Polish martyrdom, and in particular to the events of World War II. This is very much in line with the paper's right-wing ethos and its ideological roots that feed on constant differentiation between 'Us' and 'the Other'. And what better way of achieving it than by reliving old traumas? When compared with essays on history published in *Gazeta Wyborcza*, the texts written in *Nasz Dziennik* differ especially in the frequent use of pathos by the latter, accentuated by tragic photos of graves and war heroes. Also very different is the consistent refusal to notice ambiguities in the attitudes and actions of Poles. This aims to strengthen the national pride and self-image, even at the expense of whitewashing history. Sometimes the articles on World War II directly link to current

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<sup>12</sup> I. Irwin-Zarecka, *Frames of Remembrance. The Dynamics of Collective Memory*, (New Jersey, 1994), pp. 18, 37.

<sup>13</sup> I. Irwin-Zarecka, *Neutralizing memory. The Jew in Contemporary Poland*, (New Brunswick and London, 1989), pp. 175, 180.



affairs, using those past events as a warning, for example against the Germans or Ukrainians. This is a result of the newspaper's editorial line that holds on to the idea that nations have set characteristics that do not undergo change. This preservation of stereotypes is reflected in Polish society at large<sup>14</sup>, but one might expect from a national newspaper and its educated contributors a more balanced approach.

Articles published in *Nasz Dziennik* related to the Holocaust focus on denying the uniqueness of the Jewish experience and suffering during World War II, the so-called 'Holocaust industry', proving that during the occupation the 'Polish Holocaust' took place and that Jews and Germans conspire to put the blame for the Holocaust on the Poles. Jewish suffering is presented almost exclusively through a lens focused on income from the Holocaust theme publications, funds obtained to preserve the places of memory, compensation received by the victims and the like. *Nasz Dziennik* does not write about the human tragedy, about the Jewish victims, about their memories. While Polish suffering is made personal, Jewish suffering only appears in the financial context. At the same time the efforts to educate society about the Jewish war experiences are treated by the paper as a threat to the memory of Polish suffering, or even an attempt to replace the 'Polish' memory with the 'Jewish' one. This competition in suffering is especially prominent in the article of Dr Andrzej Leszek Szcześniak, where the author defended his history textbook,<sup>15</sup> in the face of accusations that it spreads damaging ideas. Even more, in the title he juxtaposed the 'truth' and the 'shoah-business', making a clear suggestion that the latter has nothing to do with the former. In his article Szcześniak highlighted that between 1939-1941 the ethnic Poles were the main victims of the Nazi occupants. He fondly listed how many members of the Polish intelligentsia were executed, however neglected to mention even the number of Jewish victims of Nazism. As for the Ministry of Education approved textbooks, Szcześniak accused them of trying to erase the 'fact that murder on the Polish Nation was planned before the war and it started being implemented on 1 September 1939. It is one of numerous lies of the shoah-business that

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<sup>14</sup> I. Krzemiński, *Antysemityzm w Polsce i na Ukrainie*, (Warsaw, 2004), pp. 108-161.

<sup>15</sup> A. L. Szcześniak (ed.), *Polska i Świat. Wspólne dziedzictwo. Podręcznik dla klasy III gimnazjum*, (Radom, 2001).

is despicable practice of exchanging of the suffering of millions of victims for figures in bank accounts of various frauds'.<sup>16</sup>

Another article in the theme of the 'Shoah-education'<sup>17</sup> is a harsh critique of a high school textbook/teaching manual *Holocaust – programme of teaching about history and extermination of the Jews*.<sup>18</sup> The author was outraged that the book talks about the uniqueness of the Holocaust; according to him it is 'a sign of chauvinism and has nothing to do with historical truth'. Further, he posed the question: 'Are deaths of 56-65 millions of victims of the Soviet system, committed with serious help of the Jews, a unique suffering?' In case the reader was still not sure who the real villains were, the author spells it out listing those responsible for the Holocaust. He pointed out: Germans, Jewish bankers who sponsored Hitler [list of names], international Jewish leaders 'who did nothing to help murdered brothers', Jewish 'elders in ghettos who commanded total passiveness, did not allow resistance to the Germans and persecuted harshly those co-operating with the Fighting Poland'. Once Szcześniak presented the 'truth', he carried on exposing the hidden agenda behind the programme of teaching about the Holocaust. To sum up, the textbook was viewed as an appeal to the Polish youth to apologise for the Holocaust.

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<sup>16</sup> A. L. Szcześniak, 'Prawda czy shoah-biznes?', *Nasz Dziennik*, 110: 12-13 May 2001, p. 19.

<sup>17</sup> A. L. Szcześniak, 'Shoah-edukacja', *Nasz Dziennik*, 117: 21 May 2001, p. 10.

<sup>18</sup> R. Szuchta, P. Trojański, *Holokaust. Program nauczania o historii i zagładzie Żydów na lekcjach przedmiotów humanistycznych w szkole ponadpodstawowej*, (Warsaw, 2000). The authors of the manual and of a high school teaching programme are high school teachers; later they published a textbook based on the programme: R. Szuchta, P. Trojański, *Holokaust zrozumieć dlaczego. Książka pomocnicza do nauki historii w szkołach ponadpodstawowych*, (Warsaw, 2003), see also a collection on essays by intellectuals and activists on the importance of teaching the Holocaust: J. Ambrosewicz-Jakobs, L. Hońdo (eds.), *Dlaczego należy uczyć o Holokauście?*, (Kraków, 2003). Post-1989 educational reforms gave teachers freedom to choose textbooks they use. Subsequently it is up to teachers to decide how much time they spend to teach the Holocaust. Thus, the grass-roots initiatives as cited above have been crucial in introducing appropriate teaching materials and methodologies on the subject. Other initiatives came from the Shalom Foundation which organized essay competition for pupils and published a book addressed to high school pupils, see: B. Engelking, F. Tych, A. Żbikowski, J. Żyndul, *Pamięć. Historia Żydów polskich przed, w czasie i po Zagładzie*, (Warsaw, 2005). Forum for Dialogue Among Nations carries out a programme for groups of young Jews and Poles and published a book in Polish and English in which prominent scholars answered difficult questions such as those about murders of Jews by Poles during and after the Holocaust see: *Difficult Questions in Polish-Jewish Dialogue*, (Warsaw, 2006). For the surveys of the Polish textbooks teaching about the Holocaust in the 1990s see: *Tematyka żydowska w podręcznikach szkolnych*, *Biuletyn ŻIH*, 3-4 (1997), pp. 13-110; F. Tych, *Długi cień Zagłady. Szkice historyczne*, (Warsaw, 1999), pp. 97-117; J. Tomaszewski, 'Jewish themes in Polish school textbooks and popular historical literature, 1989-94', *EEJA*, 24/ 2 (Winter 1994), p. 89-101.



*Nasz Dziennik* not only has been worrying about the content of Polish textbooks. The newspaper opposed plans to ban antisemitic publications and to combat such prejudice in France. With deepest concern it observed that 'French media will be subjected to the ideological control', as antisemitic and racist broadcasts would not be permitted and books about the Holocaust would be 'forcefully [przymusowo] distributed in the primary schools'.<sup>19</sup>

The uniqueness of the Jewish suffering during the Holocaust is repeatedly challenged by *Nasz Dziennik*. Whenever the Holocaust is referred to as an unprecedented crime the newspaper responds by attacking this 'grading of genocide'.<sup>20</sup> This peculiar phrase seemed to sum up an objection to differentiate between atrocities as according to *Nasz Dziennik* all suffering should be viewed with the same empathy. However, essentially the phrase was used as an objection to the special victim status of the Jews. The reason why the writers could not accept this special status was not ethical or philosophical. Although, they did use a pseudo-philosophical rhetoric in the argument. Behind this rhetoric we can see *Nasz Dziennik* defending the special status of Polish suffering. The readers soon joined in the fight against 'a racist segregation of death', as they were 'truly furious' that Jews were 'putting themselves forward before the tens of millions of other victims of Nazism and Communism'.<sup>21</sup>

One of the most prolific writers of *Nasz Dziennik* described the efforts to commemorate the Holocaust as 'the Jewish battle [to win over] the hearts and minds'.<sup>22</sup> What he meant was that Jews deliberately promote the remembrance of their suffering to overshadow that of the Poles. Specifically, he referred to the heroism of the Warsaw Uprising being overshadowed by the remembrance of the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising.<sup>23</sup> As soon as *Nasz Dziennik* identified this (alleged) 'Jewish battle' it brought

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<sup>19</sup> F. L. Ćwik, 'Powrót czrzwyczajki', *Nasz Dziennik*, 288: 11 Dec. 2003, pp. 1, 5.

<sup>20</sup> A. Hojda, 'Stopniowanie ludobójstw', *Nasz Dziennik*, 26: 1 Feb. 2005, p. 16.

<sup>21</sup> M. Czarkowski (reader), 'Obrońcy oszczerstw', *Nasz Dziennik*, 29: 4 Feb. 2005, p. 13.

<sup>22</sup> I. C. Pogonowski, 'Powstanie Warszawskie i żydowska bitwa o serca i umysły', *Nasz Dziennik*, 141: 18 June 2004, p. 12.

<sup>23</sup> The Warsaw Ghetto Uprising, April-May 1943 was the resistance of the Jewish Fighting Organisation, about 750 young Jews from the ghetto opposed final deportations by the Nazis. It is often said that the Jews fought to die in dignity. The ghetto fighters received very scarce help from the Polish underground. The Warsaw Uprising, August-October 1944 was part of a larger campaign by the Polish underground, the besieged city was destroyed by the end of 63 days of fighting and the civilians suffered great losses and hardship. The Poles never got any help from the Red Army that was expected to arrive once they started fighting the Germans. Many young Jews who escaped from the ghetto fought in the 'Polish' Uprising

out the heavy weapons to counter it. From mid-2004 Prof. I.C. Pogonowski introduced a new way of challenging the uniqueness of the Holocaust, it was an 'improved' version of the argument that claimed that the Holocaust cannot be perceived as unique because Stalin's crimes overshadow those of Hitler. This time the numbers were supposed to give credibility to the claim. Before *Nasz Dziennik* was blaming the Jews for Stalinisation and terror, but here Pogonowski went a step further: he showed that a single Jew was responsible for a genocide that was greater than that committed on the Jews by the Nazis. First of all, he stressed that in the 20<sup>th</sup> century there were 92.5 million victims murdered by Stalin, but specifically he mentioned '7 million murdered by a Jew Kaganovich'<sup>24</sup>, which lead him to conclude that the 'tragedy of Poles just as Jews presents a small part of human tragedy'<sup>25</sup>. Seemingly, those arguments also denied the Poles a claim to the uniqueness of their suffering. However, if we take articles by Pogonowski as a whole, it is only a rhetorical device, a technique of 'balancing', but its implications were totally disregarded elsewhere. On numerous occasions this author showed himself to be an ardent defender of the Polish messianism. For example he argued that Poles suffered more than Jews because 'from 1914 to 1945 more Poles perished than Jews.'<sup>26</sup>

Later Pogonowski changed the presentation of his argument, reducing the Jewish suffering to a percentage of all the murders taken committed in the 20<sup>th</sup> century; 'only [nieco] above 2% of people murdered in the 20<sup>th</sup> century died in the holocaust'.<sup>27</sup> This line of presenting the Jewish suffering was supposed to challenge the 'Jewish extremists [who] enforce their views that the world is obliged to pay them a ransom, but also accept their crimes because of humankind's guilt towards the Jews, especially of the libelled

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though as a rule they would not disclose their Jewish identity. In general, the 'Polish' Uprising is not very well known in the West or in Israel, while the 'Jewish' one in Poland does not form a part of the common war remembrance (despite the official ceremonies to commemorate the event). See also: N. Davies, *Powstanie '44*. (Kraków, 2004).

<sup>24</sup> Lazar Kaganovich, 1925-1928 First Secretary of the Communist Party in Ukraine during the suppression of the kulaks, close ally of Stalin, was involved in the enforcement of peasants collectivization in Ukraine in 1930s, later held various ministerial posts and was a member of the Politburo until 1957 see: *Wielka Encyklopedia PWN*, vol.13, (Warsaw, 2003). About Jews in the Soviet apparatus see: B. Pinkus, *The Jews of the Soviet Union: The History of a National Minority*, (Cambridge, 1988).

<sup>25</sup> I. C. Pogonowski, 'Powstanie Warszawskie i żydowska bitwa o serca i umysły', *Nasz Dziennik*, 141: 18 June 2004, p. 12.

<sup>26</sup> I. C. Pogonowski, 'Roszczenia przeciw Polsce mają jednoczyć Żydów i Niemców', *Nasz Dziennik*, 194: 19 Aug. 2004, p. 8.

<sup>27</sup> I. C. Pogonowski, 'Od antypolonizmu do wojny przeciw Islamowi', *Nasz Dziennik*, 10: 13 Jan. 2005, p. 11.



Poles.’<sup>28</sup> In the newspaper’s treatment of the Holocaust this must be the pinnacle of belittling and de-humanizing of the Jewish suffering and as a powerful argument has been used on many more occasions.

Again, *Nasz Dziennik* continued to lament Polish ‘heroism surrounded by silence.’<sup>29</sup> While praising Polish martyrdom and showing how the ‘Jewish claims movement is hiding Polish heroism’, Pogonowski stated that the ‘20<sup>th</sup> [century] was the century of death, [and] Jews make up less than 3% of victims.’<sup>30</sup> The very same phrase was used in another article exposing the ‘fallacy about the uniqueness of the holocaust.’<sup>31</sup> Pogonowski uses his authority as a former inmate of the Sachsenhausen concentration camp to build a different picture of the Holocaust as he claimed ‘[in the camp] I saw not even one star of David’<sup>32</sup>, which was supposed to prove that no Jew there was being persecuted for being a Jew. In addition, he clarified that ‘Hitler did not fight against the Jews but for “Lebensraum”.’<sup>33</sup>

Paradoxically, some of the authors of *Nasz Dziennik* talked about ‘falsification of history by Communists and anti-Polish Jewish propaganda’<sup>34</sup> with regard to the Holocaust. Others, in order to demonstrate that Polish suffering was being belittled, chose the official Soviet data on the number of victims of the biggest Nazi death camp and claimed that 4 million people died in Auschwitz alone.<sup>35</sup> Significantly, they did not mention the Jewish victims. It would be easy for a less educated audience to believe that in Auschwitz the victims were mainly ethnic Poles. Three years later authors Sawicki and Terlecki pose again their question ‘How many people did perish in Auschwitz?’<sup>36</sup> and alerted the reader to the danger that ‘History may cease to exist’ when ‘History storytellers claim that 1-1,5 million’ died in Auschwitz while according to the authors the correct number is ‘4-5,5 million confirmed by the finding after the war by the

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<sup>28</sup> Ibid.

<sup>29</sup> NB this text was first broadcast in Radio Maryja.

<sup>30</sup> I. C. Pogonowski, ‘Otoczone milczeniem bohaterstwo’, *Nasz Dziennik*, 25: 31 Jan. 2005, p. 4.

<sup>31</sup> I. C. Pogonowski, ‘Chiny a imperium amerykańskie’, *Nasz Dziennik*, 37: 14 Feb. 2005, p. 9.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid.

<sup>34</sup> I. C. Pogonowski, ‘Holocaust tarczą i bronią’, *Nasz Dziennik*, 218: 16 Sep. 2004, p. 10.

<sup>35</sup> J. Sawicki, T. Szul-Skjoeldron, W. A. Terlecki, ‘Ilu ludzi zginęło w KL Auschwitz?’, *Nasz Dziennik*, 140: 18 June 2001, p. 16.

<sup>36</sup> J. Sawicki, W.A. Terlecki, ‘Ilu ludzi zginęło w KL Auschwitz?’, *Nasz Dziennik*, 25: 30 Jan. 2004, pp. 12-13.

commission of Prof. Jan Sekn'. The authors made a suggestion that these attempts to falsify history and 'decrease German guilt' in the end may result in claims that Poles committed those crimes; 'Luckily no one can say (for the time being...) that the atrocity in Treblinka was committed by the Poles.'<sup>37</sup> This ironic comment was also an allusion to the Jedwabne case, as *Nasz Dziennik* never ceased to complain that the crime committed there was blamed on Poles instead of Germans.

The article was illustrated by the camp picture of 'Rozalia Kowalczyk, age 15, Pole who died in Auschwitz' – a fitting symbol for *Nasz Dziennik* of an Auschwitz victim. Rozalia's fair hair and beautiful face embody Polish ethnicity; she is 'the face' of Polish suffering, of the 'Polish Holocaust'. Another image that for the readers of *Nasz Dziennik* is forever inseparable from Auschwitz and from the Holocaust is the image of Saint Maximilian Kolbe. Painted in the inmate's stripy pyjamas with a shaven head and round glasses Kolbe symbolizes Polish suffering, honour and Christian love that mirrors the selflessness of the Christ. The testimony about this priest who offered his life so a father condemned to death could live is a far cry from the stories told by the newspaper about Jews who in the ghettos were worse than Nazis. It is very telling that in *Nasz Dziennik* there are no pictures of Jews printed to illustrate the articles about Auschwitz or any article concerning the Holocaust. This omission of the Jewish presence on the selected photographs should be read as a deliberate attempt to break the association of Auschwitz, and the Holocaust in general, with the Jews. Also, the lack of visual illustration of Jewish suffering 'protects' the reader from the feeling of empathy with the Jews. The only exception to this rule is the image of a Jewess turned Catholic Saint, Edith Stein. Photographed in her nun's clothes and with a cross on her chest she is the sole Jew whose picture and personal story appear in *Nasz Dziennik*. The article that presented her life, conversion into Christianity and death in Auschwitz, also recalled with empathy, unusual for *Nasz Dziennik*, the dangers facing the Jews in Germany after the Kristallnacht. But this glimpse of empathy was overshadowed by the words, which stressed that Stein offered her life 'in the spirit of expiation for the lack of faith among

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<sup>37</sup> Ibid.



the Jewish people.’<sup>38</sup> Also, the author accused Jews of aiming ‘to bring down her life and suffering only to the dimension of the persecution of the Jews.’<sup>39</sup>

In other articles on the same theme Sawicki and Terlecki stressed that Auschwitz was ‘created as a camp for Poles’<sup>40</sup> as well as that it was ‘the biggest tragedy in world history’. In addition, they barely mention Jews in their works.<sup>41</sup> Clearly *Nasz Dziennik* is not consistent on its policy against differentiating between sufferings. This ‘Polish status’ of the camp was underlined, in the same issue of the newspaper, by stories of Polish inmates of the camp. K. Zembrzycka was pregnant when she was imprisoned in Auschwitz and fell into the hands of German doctors who subjected her to horrific experiments, but in her story one remark ‘Jewish fate was doomed’<sup>42</sup> showed that she saw a difference in her situation and that of the Jewish inmates. Another inmate had no such empathy. He told his story in order to proclaim the ‘truth about the camp’, as opposed to the history told by Jews. He demanded to know ‘why it is said that this camp was for the Jews, as for the first two years mainly the Poles perished there.’<sup>43</sup> It is a *leitmotiv* of the newspaper’s treatment of the Holocaust, a laconic acknowledgement of the Jewish suffering, a glimpse of empathy is overshadowed by the accounts of Polish suffering.

Despite this ‘Catholicising’ and ‘Polonising’ of Auschwitz *Nasz Dziennik* never really led a campaign in support of the field of crosses in Auschwitz which were erected by a group of nationalists in 1998. Although *Nasz Dziennik* showed some support for the idea that Catholic symbols should be displayed to commemorate Catholic victims. There were a number of reasons that can explain the reservation of the newspaper, first of all the clear stance of Pope John Paul II on the matter that directly preceded the crosses controversy – that of the Carmelite convent<sup>44</sup>, and the fact that the height of the conflict

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<sup>38</sup> P. Sieradzki, ‘Dar rozumu i łaska wiary’, *Nasz Dziennik*, 185: 9 Aug. 2004, p. 10.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid.

<sup>40</sup> J. Sawicki, W. A. Terlecki, ‘Auschwitz-największa tragedia w dziejach świata’, *Nasz Dziennik*, 18: 22-23 Jan. 2005, pp. 18-19.

<sup>41</sup> J. Sawicki, W. A. Terlecki, ‘Prawdziwa historia’, *Nasz Dziennik*, 22: 27 Jan. 2005, p. 1.

<sup>42</sup> K. Zembrzycka, ‘Zapiski oświęcimskie’, *Nasz Dziennik*, 22: 27 Jan. 2005, p. 10.

<sup>43</sup> J. Junosza-Kowalew, ‘Wierzyłem, że przeżyję’, *Nasz Dziennik*, 22: 27 Jan. 2005, p. 9.

<sup>44</sup> In 1993 John Paul II, recognizing the issue of the convent to be a hurdle for the Jewish-Catholic dialogue, got personally involved in the negotiations and issued a disposition for the nuns to move to a different place, see: B. L. Sherwin, ‘Katolicka teologia judaizmu w nauczaniu Jana Pawła II’, in: B. L. Sherwin, H. Kasimow (eds.), *Jan Paweł II i dialog międzyreligijny*, (Kraków, 2001), p.159; see also: W. T. Bartoszewski, *The Convent at Auschwitz*, (New York, 1990). A journalistic account of the convent

took place before 2001 and the Jedwabne case, a period when *Nasz Dziennik* was still concerned to be seen as a balanced and respectable newspaper. Also, the ring leader of the crosses campaign Kazimierz Świtoń became a media symbol of a mad antisemite. As *Nasz Dziennik* wants its articles on Jewish topics to be viewed as constructively critical, but not antisemitic, the association with Świtoń was not desirable. Nevertheless, some offhand comments in articles on topics not related to Auschwitz allow the readers to know that *Nasz Dziennik* saw the cross as a fitting commemoration of the victims of Auschwitz.<sup>45</sup> The newspaper printed a homily of the priest known for his antisemitic comments, H. Jankowski, in which out of the context of his address he attacked those for whom ‘the Cross in Oświęcim, or in a school is an obstacle.’<sup>46</sup> Nevertheless, it has to be strongly pointed out, that while *Nasz Dziennik* prints pages of essays on other Jewish-Polish topics, the matter of the cross in Auschwitz did not take a great prominence.

Official educational programmes about Auschwitz were viewed by *Nasz Dziennik* as ‘one-sided’, distorting history by showing only the Jewish perspective. An article listed all nationalities that perished in Auschwitz and clarified, but without giving exact numbers, that ‘Jews and Poles were the two biggest groups of victims in Auschwitz.’<sup>47</sup> Strictly speaking this statement is historically true; nevertheless it distorts the truth as it does not mention that the group of Jewish victims was overwhelmingly higher than that of Poles.<sup>48</sup> Some million of Jewish victims get lost in this statement. Another attempt to equal the suffering of Jews and Poles was expressed in the words of a politician, Jan Łopuszański: ‘Jews see the holocaust in a one-sided way; exactly the same happened to us.’<sup>49</sup> In some articles Poles were portrayed as being persecuted and suffering as much as the Jews. Wybranowski in his text about IPN’s exhibition ‘Wielkopolska region under German occupation’ presents the material in such a way that allegedly the representatives

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controversy can be found in E. Klein, *The Battle for Auschwitz. Catholic-Jewish relations under strain*, (London, 2001).

<sup>45</sup>For an excellent analysis of the crosses controversy that presents it in a larger context of Polish nationalism and religious-patriotic discourse see: G. Zubrzycki, *The Crosses of Auschwitz. Nationalism and Religion in Post-Communist Poland*, (Chicago and London, 2006).

<sup>46</sup> H. Jankowski, ‘Narodzie! Obudź się!’, *Nasz Dziennik*, 152: 1 July 2004, p. 11.

<sup>47</sup> R. Popielewicz, ‘Jednostronna edukacja’, *Nasz Dziennik*, 263: 9 Nov. 2004, p. 3.

<sup>48</sup> About 1 million Jews were murdered in Auschwitz (90% of all victims), and about 70,000 of ethnic Poles were murdered there (7% of all victims). See: F. Piper, *Ilu ludzi zginęło w KL Auschwitz. Liczba ofiar w świetle źródeł i badań 1945-1990*, (Oświęcim, 1992).

<sup>49</sup> *Nasz Dziennik*, 263: 9 Nov. 2004, p. 3.



of IPN agree with the author's conclusions that: 'The situation of Poles in the occupied Wielkopolska [region] was comparable to, if not worse than, that of the Jewish population' [...]. After 1942 there was no difference between the treatment of Jews and Poles by the Germans. The Church was the main "enemy".'<sup>50</sup>

Further, the newspaper criticized the decision of the Polish Ministry of Education to introduce in the schools the Holocaust Commemoration Days [Dni Pamięci o Holokauście] as a sign that 'Martyrdom of the Poles [is] less important'. It asserted that first of all the truth about Polish martyrdom, especially KL Warschau<sup>51</sup>, has to be taught in Polish schools. If this requirement is not met the children in the future will be taught about 'Polish concentration camps'. As Dr L. Żebrowski stressed it is already a practice in the West where 'there is practically no knowledge about the Polish martyrdom' or about Poles being 'exterminated for being Polish.'<sup>52</sup> Żebrowski used a leitmotif of injustice towards the Poles, as their 'martyrdom [is viewed as] less important' by Jews and by the world.

Like most of the Polish media, *Nasz Dziennik* was unhappy with the decision of the European Parliament not to commemorate Auschwitz as a German death camp and to opt instead for the use of the phrase 'Nazi death camp', but it not only criticized de-nationalizing of the crime<sup>53</sup>, but was offended and upset at what it saw to be a slur to mention homosexuals as victims of Nazism before the Poles.<sup>54</sup> This in turn led the journalist to warn the reader that the 'European Parliament falsifies history'.

Another tendency was revealed in *Nasz Dziennik* in the context of (ethnic) Polish-Jewish relations during World War II – the paper presented the Jews as villains and criminals.<sup>55</sup> Dr Szcześniak, who specialises in reporting about 'Jewish crimes committed on Poles', in an article about the 'shoah<sup>1</sup>-business?'<sup>56</sup> revealed more Jewish atrocities. He talked about a group of (alleged) Jewish agents working for the Gestapo, who were infiltrating the Polish partisan groups and about a Jewish gang 'Zemsta' murdering

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<sup>50</sup> W. Wybranowski, 'Głównym "wrogiem" był Kościół', *Nasz Dziennik*, 122: 27 May 2003, pp. 1, 5.

<sup>51</sup> See pp. 82-84 in this chapter.

<sup>52</sup> Z. Baranowski, 'Martyrologia Polaków mniej ważna', *Nasz Dziennik*, 291: 13 Dec. 2004, pp. 1, 3.

<sup>53</sup> A. Hojda, 'Niemieckie obozy koncentracyjne', *Nasz Dziennik*, 22: 27 Jan. 2005, p. 22.

<sup>54</sup> P. Wesołowski, 'Europarlament fałszuje historię', *Nasz Dziennik*, 20: 25 Jan. 2005, p. 1.

<sup>55</sup> For a broader discussion of the myth of Jewish criminality see: M. Berkowitz, *The Crime of My Very Existence. Nazism and the Myth of Jewish Criminality*, (Berkeley, 2007).

<sup>56</sup> A. L. Szcześniak 'Prawda czy shoah-biznes', *Nasz Dziennik*, 110: 12-13 May 2001, p. 19.

partisans in the Lublin region. In addition, Szcześniak put one next to the other: the extermination of the Jews by the Germans and the extermination of ethnic Poles by the Soviets, in the latter according to Szcześniak 'to a great extent Jews participated. As a voluntary Soviet militia they robbed Polish property, wrote lists of Poles doomed for extermination [zagłada<sup>ii</sup>] and deportation, took part in the destruction of churches, murdered displaced Polish troops in 1939 and directly participated in the extermination [zagłada] of the Polish population.'<sup>57</sup> These general statements Szcześniak illustrated with the examples of Tuvia Bielski, Markov's Brigade and the murder in Koniuchy village. So easily for this historian crimes of individuals were supposed to testify about the guilt of the whole nation. Finally, the author reminded the reader about 'the criminal role that the Jews played in the process of Stalinization of Poland' and in the 'propaganda apparatus of PRL [Polish People Republic], libelling of the independence activists and in the works of "scholars" that distorted the truth about Polish history'.

Blaming the Jews for the crimes of the Stalin era and evils of Communism is a canon of antisemitic rhetoric, but this article implies that the Jewish suffering is somehow cancelled out or reduced by the Polish martyrdom, even more as the title suggests, Jewish suffering or its extent is not the truth but someone's business. Another example of how the Holocaust is 'cancelled out' by Polish suffering is the testimony of a former Home Army officer: 'in 1939 Jews tortured me, after the war the whole UB [Urząd Bezpieczeństwa – Security Office] was Jewish, gulags were worse than concentration camps.'<sup>58</sup>

The theme continued, Jews were transformed from victims to villains in the article of Grażyna Dziedzińska that outlines why Jews 'ought to respect'<sup>59</sup> Poles. This message was actually only a pretext for the author to list (only main) reasons why Poles might disrespect Jews today. The scheme of presenting the Jews is as follows:

1. The very title suggests that Jews hold negative attitudes towards Poles; it implies that they do not respect Poles. The text is a polemic against this alleged attitude.

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<sup>57</sup> Ibid.

<sup>58</sup> 'Narody bez pamięci giną', *Nasz Dziennik*, 306: 31 Dec.- 2 Jan. 2005, pp. 18-19.

<sup>59</sup> G. Dziedzińska, 'Nie muszą nas kochać, ale powinni szanować', *Nasz Dziennik*, 165: 7 May 2001, pp. 10-11.



This fits in with the theme of ‘anti-Polonism’, which is very prominent in *Nasz Dziennik*. The assertion about Jews hating (or as here disrespecting) Poles helps in gaining the reader’s support for the points made in the article. Also, it whitewashes the self-image. Poles do not have to feel bad about antisemitism, after all their negative feelings are upstaged by fierce Jewish ‘anti-Polonism’. Besides, while ‘anti-Polonism’ is groundless, Poles have reasons to resent Jews. Hence, the author obliged and moved on quickly to list those reasons.

2. The introduction recalls the Jews participating in the deportations of the Poles from Kresy (the East marches) to the Soviet labour camps. Later Dziedzińska talks about acts of homage that the Jews paid to the Soviets in September 1939 on the occupied Polish territories and of their involvement in the repression apparatus.
3. The subtitle ‘Medal for Berman’ opens a paragraph that sketches the involvement of the Jews in the UB [Communist security apparatus], lists names of the Jewish activists and specifically talks about the Morel case: ‘Morel – the criminal was saved by Polish peasants, after the war a commander of a camp in Jaworzno tortured Polish anti-Communist activists’, (NB: In *Nasz Dziennik* Salomon Morel is a personification of all Jewish evils and crimes committed during the Communist period, see also p. 153);
4. ‘Thanks to the Poles hundreds of thousands of Jews survived’ – this paragraph tells the tale of unquestionable Polish heroism: ‘Jews were saved by the society that itself was subject to destruction by Hitler’s occupants: pacifications, mass shootings among other for hiding the Jews!’ – here the messianic aspect comes back as Poles suffered also for the Jews;
5. ‘They believed the Nazis’ – describes other contrast between devout aid of ‘Żegota’ (the Underground cell established to help and save Jews) and the Polish rail workers delivered to the Jews, and the passivity of the latter. The readers may start to suspect that such an immense number of Jewish victims was, to a great extent, an effect of this passivity and lack of self-defence;
6. ‘Massacre in Cisie village’ – it is the history of the entire village population that was murdered for hiding some Jews. At this occasion the author asks in a tone full

of pathos: ‘Is there another nation in the world that in sacrificing its own life was saving from destruction [zagłada] so many human beings, people who always stressed their separateness and even superiority, trying to isolate themselves from the society in which they were living according to the rule “Its our soil but not our nation/people”?’ This suggests that all Poles were saving Jews, which is not true, but mainly the passage implies that the majority of the Jews was not even worthy of this Polish sacrifice. ‘Shameless accusations’, that is voices concerning Polish indifference to the Jewish lot during the occupation, are allegedly ‘very convenient for the rich and influential Jews in the West, especially for the grand financiers in the USA, who could have saved their own nation from destruction but did not do it’. An accusation that some Poles acted as *szmalcownicy*<sup>60</sup> the author judges as exaggerated, as according to her those people came only from the clandestine element or *volksdeutsch*<sup>61</sup> background. Again, ethnic Poles are depicted as blameless, capable only of sacrifice for the other. Even further, she puts the blame for blowing up the covers and exposing the true identities of hiding Jews on Jewish Gestapo agents. In the article, which on the whole does not occur in *Nasz Dziennik*, we find a short reference to the Jewish suffering; a description of poverty and suffering in the Warsaw ghetto. Nevertheless, it only appears to illustrate the cruelty of Jewish ghetto police who ‘were making sure that a child would not steal some bread’.

7. ‘Indifferent to the ghetto’s fate’ – in the last paragraph the author claims that AK [the Home Army] delivered to ŻOB [the Jewish Fighting Organisation] ‘everything that was at the patriotic underground’s disposal’.
8. The pictures of families from Cisie murdered for hiding Jews illustrate the article.

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<sup>60</sup> Poles who turned in hiding Jews to the Gestapo, often after promising Jews help and after taking money for this help.

<sup>61</sup> Poles who signed the list asserting their German ethnicity. For the Nazis this put them above the Polish population. Many people signed such lists not so much as to show their support for the Nazis, but in order to avoid deportation to Germany and becoming forced laborers. Native population of the Upper Silesia was given such status automatically. Others collaborated with the occupants. There were also cases of *volksdeutschs* using their status in helping the underground. To this day Polish public opinion views them almost unequivocally as traitors. This is especially contentious for the minority population in the Upper Silesia region.



Dziedzińska's article is an excellent illustration of a general policy of *Nasz Dziennik* on presenting the Holocaust and Jewish suffering. In most of the articles, even in those of which the titles suggest that they are devoted to the topic of the Holocaust, the actual extermination of the Jews is treated marginally. The Holocaust is cited hand in hand with 'Jewish crimes of the Communist period'. Woven into the fabric of accusations against the Jews, in *Nasz Dziennik* the Holocaust becomes one more reason to perceive the Jews as always failing to act in an honourable way. In an extraordinary fashion, Polish sins and 'dark' moments, wrongs against the Jews during the occupation, insufficient help or even lack of empathy, in a few paragraphs are added up and all blamed on the Jews. Not Poles but Jews betrayed themselves during the Nazi occupation and now they try to badmouth the heroes. The sheer confidence with which the author transfers the blame onto the victim is extraordinary. In many other articles the transfer of the guilt connected to the treatment of the Jews by some Poles before and during the occupation had a very different pattern. The guilt felt towards the Holocaust victims was transferred into accusations about the Jews-Communists. This pattern is also present in Dziedzińska's article. However, she actually transfers the blame onto the Holocaust victims themselves. This pattern not only whitewashes the Polish self-image from such difficult topics as Nazis collaboration, but also prevents the reader from empathising with the Holocaust victims.

The article discussed above stressed the merits of the Poles saving Jews, in addition *Nasz Dziennik* publishes regular columns introducing those who were awarded the title 'Righteous Among the Nations'<sup>62</sup> and about cases of the help given to Jews, especially highlighting those, in which the Roman Catholic Church was involved.<sup>63</sup> At the same time the Jews are accused of deliberate silence about those heroic deeds<sup>64</sup> The newspaper becomes a fervent defender of the Vatican<sup>65</sup> and the Catholic Church in

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<sup>62</sup> R. Popielewicz, 'Narażali własne życie', *Nasz Dziennik*, 130: 6 June 2001, p. 3

<sup>63</sup> E. Kurek, 'Na ratunek dzieciom. Polskie zakonnice wobec zagłady Żydów', *Nasz Dziennik*, 5 April 2001, p.11.

<sup>64</sup> Interview with J. R. Nowak 'Rachunek niezaspokojonych krzywd', *Nasz Dziennik*, 195: 21-22 Aug. 1999, pp. 1, 10-11.

<sup>65</sup> I. C. Pogonowski, 'Insynuacje przeciw watykanowi i innym państwom', *Nasz Dziennik*, 303: 31 Dec.- 2 Jan. 2004, p. 13.



general whenever any accusations are raised that the Church was silent in the face of the Jewish catastrophe and that more could have been done to save individual Jews<sup>66</sup>

The role that Poles played with regard to Jews during the war in *Nasz Dziennik* is one-dimensional, simply heroic. It can be best summed up by the article 'Victim saving the others'<sup>67</sup> that quotes the sermon of Archbishop Józef Michalik at the occasion of the unveiling of the monument commemorating the Ulm family shot by Nazis for sheltering Jews and now awaiting beatification. The Archbishop said that by their sacrificial death Ulm martyrs 'overshadow sins and weaknesses of other people. It is worthwhile to look up to this family when Poles are accused of antisemitism'. The message is clear, Poles were the victims who saved others, now they are again victimised, as their righteousness is not recognised and they are accused of antisemitism. Those who like Czesław Miłosz with his poem 'Campo di fiori' seem to spoil the perfect picture of Polish martyrdom are being labelled as liars and freemasons.<sup>68</sup>

In the eyes of the writers of *Nasz Dziennik* those who were silent, passive and should be blamed for not helping the Jews in Poland are not Poles but... the Jews. This view was allegedly supported by Reuven Zygielbojm, brother of Shmul, who was reported to have said: 'Jews scattered across the whole world did not behave as they should, especially the Jews in America' and 'the Holocaust [zagłada] completed itself with the quiet approval of the Allies.'<sup>69</sup> Not only were American Jews accused of not helping the Jews in Poland, in *Nasz Dziennik* they were also guilty of turning a blind eye to Polish suffering, so Father Kamieński asks: 'What good did the American Jews do for other nations, for example for the Poles who were under the German occupation and also perished in the death camps?'<sup>70</sup>

*Nasz Dziennik* constantly reminds its readers about the lack of Jewish gratitude for Polish heroism. The most dramatic in tone of those reminders was the interview with Anna Poray-Wybranowska from Canada who documents Polish heroism in saving the Jews during World War II. She claimed to have convincing evidence to estimate that '1 million of Poles were saving Jews'. She criticized the 'restrictive conditions of Yad

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<sup>66</sup> A. Hojda, 'Fight over accomplice', *Nasz Dziennik*, 228: 28 Sep. 2004, p. 16.

<sup>67</sup> M. Kamieniecki, 'Ofiara ratująca innych', *Nasz Dziennik*, 72: 25 Mar. 2004, p. 7.

<sup>68</sup> S. Surdy, 'Miłosz złożony', *Nasz Dziennik*, 200: 26 Aug. 2004, p. 10.

<sup>69</sup> B. Andrzejewska, 'Lekcja żywej historii', *Nasz Dziennik*, 246: 21 Oct. 2003, p. 4.



Vashem in acknowledging the Righteous Among the Nations' – it almost sounded like a deliberately unjust system that belittles the Polish efforts. Wybranowska made a plea 'to erect a memorial wall with the names of all those who saved the Jews because 'those Poles are the greatest heroes in the world.'<sup>71</sup> The article asserted what the title implied, not only a great number of Poles were heroes during the war, Poles in general are a 'nation of heroes'.

The former Israeli Ambassador to Poland Shewah Weiss became for *Nasz Dziennik* a personification of Jewish ingratitude towards Poles and a subject of fierce attacks. He has been attacked for stressing that in Auschwitz Germans mainly murdered Jews<sup>72</sup> and for not mentioning that Poles were saving the Jews.<sup>73</sup> The latter was a particularly nasty manipulation as Weiss was very popular in the Polish media and whenever he talked about the war he mentioned his personal, very positive experience and stressed that he was saved by a Polish and a Ukrainian family. But for *Nasz Dziennik* mentioning Ukrainians as heroic must have been most unwelcome. Also, the former ambassador was the initiator of programmes in which Israeli youths meet those who saved Jews, something that newspaper never mentioned even when referring to those meetings.

This greatness and heroism of the Polish nation was said to be deliberately overlooked by the world, mainly because of damaging Jewish campaigns against the Poles. This was especially seen in the fact that the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising is a widely known and taught event, while the heroic effort of the Poles in the Warsaw Uprising is pushed into oblivion. Pogonowski even wrote about 'the Jewish battle [to win over] the hearts and minds' in which 'one of the weapons of the Jewish claims movement was, with the aid of the media controlled by the Jews, concealment of all positive mentions or news about Poland.'<sup>74</sup> One of those rare events when The Warsaw Uprising was acknowledged in the American media was a documentary about the event broadcast by CNN. The authors of *Nasz Dziennik* praised this film; in particular S. Surdy saw in it an

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<sup>70</sup> L. Kamieński, 'Czy rzeczywiście milczał?!', *Nasz Dziennik*, 194: 21 Aug. 2003, p.15.

<sup>71</sup> 'Naród bohaterów', *Nasz Dziennik*, 238: 9-10 Oct. 2004, p. 16.

<sup>72</sup> 'Polska nadal "antysemicka"', *Nasz Dziennik*, 225: 26 Sep. 2003, p. 16.

<sup>73</sup> S. Surdy, 'Żegnamy ambasadora', *Nasz Dziennik*, 15: 19 Jan. 2004, p. 8.

<sup>74</sup> I. C. Pogonowski, 'Powstanie Warszawskie i żydowska bitwa o serca i umysły', *Nasz Dziennik*, 141: 18 June 2004, p. 12.



appropriate presentation of Polish suffering as ‘the scenes of extermination of the Jews appear proportionally, because the portrayal of the Polish suffering is dominant, without annoying [drażliwych] Jewish themes.’<sup>75</sup> What did he mean by this? Did he refer to the portrayal of Jewish suffering? It was not made clear what Jewish themes the author found particularly annoying. Sometimes even a gesture of good will towards the Jews and a sign of commemoration of Jewish victims was interpreted by the journalists of *Nasz Dziennik* as evidence of disregarding of the Polish suffering, for example W. Olszak was upset that ‘Chancellor Willy Brant knelt down under the Ghetto Heroes memorial not under the memorial of the Warsaw Uprising.’<sup>76</sup>

The previously mentioned theme of accusing the Jews of collaboration with the Gestapo and of reporting the cruelty of the Jewish ghetto police is woven into many articles. At the same time the newspaper repeatedly denies cases of Polish-Nazi collaboration of *szmalcownicy*. In addition, a story about ‘a Jew who was hidden by Polish hosts, but who later betrayed them to the UB’ became almost proverbial, as authors do not even show concern to provide factual details of the circumstances. Also, such phrases appear out of context in the articles not devoted to World War II, like for instance in the article of Father Prof. C. Bartnik criticizing the EU.<sup>77</sup> In another article Bartnik juxtaposed the image of a Jew-victim under the Nazi occupation with that of the Jew-collaborator under the Soviet occupation. In a rare sign of empathy, for this author and the newspaper, Bartnik admitted that ‘the German occupation was worst for the Jews’, but this statement was immediately ‘balanced’ by the description on how Jews were welcoming the Soviets with flowers in 1939 and the following statement: ‘The psychological situation was complicated, because during the Soviet occupation the Jews stood widely against Poland and the non-communist Poles.’<sup>78</sup> The author even gave a specific description of persecution of the Jews: ‘[Germans] were setting on fire Jews’ *payes* and were kicking them’. In the patchwork of the article’s negative statements about the Jews this sentence takes on a very ambiguous dimension. Since the author did not mention what fate awaited the Jews from the Nazis, but talked about heroic fights of

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<sup>75</sup> S. Surdy, ‘Trzy kwadransy prawdy w CNN’, *Nasz Dziennik*, 134: 9-10 June 2004, p. 7.

<sup>76</sup> W. Olszak, ‘Prezydent wszystkich’, *Nasz Dziennik*, 230: 30 Sep. 2004, p. 16.

<sup>77</sup> C. Bartnik, ‘Polski Titanic z Unijną orkiestrą’, *Nasz Dziennik*, 21: 26 Jan. 2005, pp. 10-11.



Poles and detailed suffering of displaced civilians, his description of Jewish suffering looks like a cruel prank when he set it against the background of the plight of Poles.

Carefully selected letters from the readers published by *Nasz Dziennik* tell very personal moving stories of lives and heroism under the Nazi occupation. Among, those accounts we find harsh criticisms by an (alleged) eyewitness who gave himself the credit of objectivity by claiming that before the war he had had some Jewish friends and proceeded to make a poignant statement that ‘the Jewish police was worse than the Germans.’<sup>79</sup> Another reader in his account about the ghetto in Sieradz called the Jewish police ‘sadists’, while he equated the fate of the ethnic Poles to that of Jews in the words: ‘we knew that after the Jews it would be our turn, and that is what happened.’<sup>80</sup>

The theme of the Jewish collaboration with the Nazis was often exploited by the chief publicist of *Nasz Dziennik* – Prof. I. C. Pogonowski. The most striking example of which was his story about a ghetto rabbi who betrayed a baptized Jew, after personalizing the theme with this story he made a general statement that: ‘thousands of Catholics were murdered in ghettos with the help of Jewish police, because they were of Jewish origin, but at the same time they did not consider themselves Jewish.’<sup>81</sup> The article revealed a new aspect of history as rewritten by Pogonowski and others; Jews even when persecuted by a third party pose a deadly danger to the Catholics. Again, Jewish victims were portrayed as villains so their suffering can be diminished if not cancelled out, all this was painted against the background of Polish moral superiority. Here this moral superiority was personified by a priest, Marcelli Godlewski, who ‘before the war criticized usury [lichwa] of Jews but during the war he helped them’<sup>82</sup>. The morale of this article is clear: a Polish priest, even an antisemite, always remains a good person, unlike a Jew, even a rabbi cannot be trusted to behave decently.

Further, Pogonowski has not stopped at accusing individual Jews of collaboration; the whole Zionist movement was accused of collaboration with the Nazis.

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<sup>78</sup> C. Bartnik, ‘Początek wojny w oczach chłopca z zamojszczyzny’, *Nasz Dziennik*, 208: 4-5 Sep. 2004, pp. 19-20.

<sup>79</sup> C. Tomczak (reader), ‘W Płocku przed wojną i w czasie jej trwania’, *Nasz Dziennik*, 222: 23 Sep. 2003, p.15.

<sup>80</sup> J. Erenc, ‘Getto w Sieradzu’ (letter), *Nasz Dziennik*, 273: 24 Nov. 2003, p. 15.

<sup>81</sup> I. C. Pogonowski, ‘Przykra prawda historyczna’, *Nasz Dziennik*, 28: 3 Feb. 2005, p. 11.



As the authoritative source to his article the author chose Lenni Brenner's *51 Documents. Zionist Collaboration with the Nazis*.<sup>83</sup> So Jews are shown to be collaborating with the Nazi government from 1933, also they are labelled as fascists on a par with Nazis and Mussolini's followers.<sup>84</sup> This theme was so important for Pogonowski and *Nasz Dziennik* that they used the reinforcement technique. Six days later the re-edited article appeared again in the newspaper with the appearance of being fresh news. The author delighted himself in descriptions how in 1933 the Zionists declared their admiration for Hitler.<sup>85</sup>

In the eyes of the authors publishing in *Nasz Dziennik* the dishonest and dishonourable behaviour of Jews towards Poles has not ended with the war or even with the fall of Communism. The newspaper abhors the actions of the Jews in the most important Holocaust theme in *Nasz Dziennik* that exposes the so-called 'Holocaust industry'.<sup>86</sup> In the article 'The third plunder attack [Trzeci najazd łupieżczy]'<sup>87</sup> Henryk Przemyski presented excerpts from Norman G. Finkelstein's book<sup>88</sup> and was outraged at the scam of Jewish organisations making fraudulent damage claims. He warns that Poland is threatened by plunder. Demands for return of Jewish property and J.T. Gross's *Neighbors*, according to Przemyski, were just a beginning of a 'crusade' [sic] against Poland, while only Poland's acceptance of Jewish requests will be the condition of her accession to the EU, but before that Poland is due for 'economic boycott and a smear campaign in the American press and will even face accusations that the Poles built the concentration camps and are responsible for the holocaust [sic]'.<sup>89</sup>

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<sup>82</sup> Ibid. For a critical discussion of this and other cases of antisemites helping Jews see: D. Libionka, 'Antisemitism, Anti-Judaism, and the Polish Catholic Clergy during the Second World War, 1939-1945', in R. Blobaum (ed.), *Antisemitism and...*, pp. 250-255.

<sup>83</sup> L. Brenner (ed.), *51 Documents. Zionist Collaboration with the Nazis*, (New York, 2002).

<sup>84</sup> I. C. Pogonowski, 'Kolaboracja syjonistów z nazistami', *Nasz Dziennik*, 181: 5 Aug. 2003, p. 11.

<sup>85</sup> I. C. Pogonowski, 'Nazistowski manifest syjonistów', *Nasz Dziennik*, 186: 11 Aug. 2003, p. 7.

<sup>86</sup> In Polish: 'przedsiębiorstwo Holokaust' or 'przemysł Holokaustu', also sometimes spelled with small 'h'.

<sup>87</sup> H. Przemyski, 'Trzeci najazd łupieżczy', *Nasz Dziennik*, 53: 3-4 March 2001, p. 6.

<sup>88</sup> N. G. Finkelstein, *Przedsiębiorstwo holokaust*, (Warsaw, 2001). The Polish translation was published a year after its English original *The Holocaust Industry: Reflections on the Exploitation of Jewish Suffering*, (London, 2000), the Polish publisher Oficyna Wydawnicza Volumen specialises in books on literature and history, with occasional publications denoting political leanings to the right. In my view Finkelstein's book was always going to be exploited by the nationalistic media, however the Jedwabne case meant that it became the favourite weapon against Gross's *Neighbors*.

<sup>89</sup> H. Przemyski, 'Trzeci najazd łupieżczy (cz. II)', *Nasz Dziennik*, 56: 7 March 2001, p. 6.



One step further in the accusatory campaign was taken by Piotr Wojnicki who warned against the ‘Jews strengthen[ing] their influence’.<sup>90</sup> Here the ‘holocaust cartel’ was said to conspire to receive compensations from the Poles, in collaboration with the Germans ‘who are making the deal of the century, a deal to evade the responsibility for the war!’. As in Przemyski’s article, here too the Jedwabne murder case was seen as the beginning of the ‘cartel holocaust’s’ campaign. A word of caution came from Germany where according to the author Jewish-Russian immigrants forced the government to grant them ‘special living conditions’.

It is a general consensus among the authors and readers (those whose letters are published) that Germans paid their way out from the accusations of the Jewish claims movement. Jews are portrayed as being so satisfied with the received ‘ransom’ that they no longer see Germans as guilty of the Holocaust. As one author summed up ‘perpetrators of a holocaust were forgiven, but we are made into greatest enemies’<sup>91</sup> To strengthen the vision of German-Jewish unity at the expense of Poland and Poles Pogonowski quotes *Forward* that (allegedly) ‘writes about Jews and Germans as Holocaust survivors.’<sup>92</sup> And of course Poland is going to pick up the bill of this new brotherhood as ‘now Germans are getting into the queue for victims [...] if we respond to Jewish claims we will have to pay off the Germans too.’<sup>93</sup>

Prof. Iwo Pogonowski took up the same theme in the article ‘Holocaust [made] more ‘right’ [słuszny].’<sup>94</sup> He wrote about ‘false propaganda of the Jewish claims movement’ and about ‘religion of holocaust’. These two can be seen in Poland in the plan to build a national Jewish history museum in Warsaw that allegedly is going to cost the Polish taxpayer 65 million dollars. Further, according to Pogonowski this Jewish movement has already received the compensations from the German government and the Swiss banks. However, in order to maintain its existence the movement has to ‘convince the world wide public opinion, that other countries took part in the destruction [zagłada] of the Jews.’ Therefore ‘the claims movement’ in the Jedwabne case ‘revives the Nazi

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<sup>90</sup> P. Wojnicki, ‘Na specjalnych warunkach. Żydzi umacniają swoje wpływy’, *Nasz Dziennik*, 162: 13 June 2001, p. 12.

<sup>91</sup> C. Bartnik, ‘Co Chrześcijaństwo dało Europie?’, *Nasz Dziennik*, 232: 2-3 Oct. 2004, p. 14.

<sup>92</sup> I. C. Pogonowski, ‘Roszczenia przeciw Polsce mają jednoczyć Żydów i Niemców’, *Nasz Dziennik*, 194: 19 Aug. 2004, p. 8.

<sup>93</sup> ‘Religia wypędzonych’, *Nasz Dziennik*, 288: 11 Dec. 2003, p. 16.



propaganda' as a form of putting pressure on the Polish government in order to reclaim the Jewish property. Elsewhere, we learned that this shady claims movement is made of greedy solicitors<sup>95</sup> and ridden by corruption and scandals.<sup>96</sup>

Even more extreme conclusions were drawn by Pogonowski in the article entitled 'Holocaust profiteers'.<sup>97</sup> The author suggested that 'the lucrative growth of the Jewish holocaust cult and the activities of the Jewish claims movement' have been supported by such individuals as J.T. Gross and George Soros and such institutions as the Institute of National Remembrance (IPN) and the Batory Foundation; together they are supposed to work to downplay the Nazi crimes, and shed the responsibility for them on the Polish Nation. All that in order to receive 'over a hundred of milliards of dollars' worth of Jewish property. Another author coined an even more strong phrase, as he writes about 'hyenas of the shoah-business'<sup>98</sup> blackmailing the Poles. While in a different article, we come across a popular technique – making a point stronger by quoting a Jew. So we read that Israel Szahak said that 'the Holocaust for the Jews is a tool of a political blackmail of non-Jews.'<sup>99</sup>

While back in 2001 this blackmailing was mainly seen in the J.T. Gross's publication on the widely discussed 'Jedwabne murders case', in 2004 *Nasz Dziennik* was frantic about the new project of the Wiesenthal Centre, 'The Last Chance'. On the pages of *Nasz Dziennik* the two 'blackmailing campaigns' were linked together as the Wiesenthal Centre was reported to support on its website a higher number of victims in Jedwabne than IPN's findings. This very fact discredited the institution in the opinion of the newspaper and made its actions ethically questionable.

In order to create an atmosphere of paranoia *Nasz Dziennik* made fictitious predictions that in the campaign of the Wiesenthal Centre 'there will be "wanted" posters like in the Wild West for pointing out Poles collaborating with the Germans in the extermination of the Jews.'<sup>100</sup> It also suggested that offering 10,000 euros for pointing out

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<sup>94</sup> I. C. Pogonowski, 'Holokaust bardziej „słuszny”' *Nasz Dziennik*, 197: 24-25 Aug. 2002, pp. 14-15.

<sup>95</sup> I. C. Pogonowski, 'Kompromitacja ruchu roszczeniowego', *Nasz Dziennik*, 215: 15 Sep. 2003, p. 10.

<sup>96</sup> I. C. Pogonowski, '“Wyciek” odszkodowań”?', *Nasz Dziennik*, 283: 3 Dec. 2004, p. 6.

<sup>97</sup> I. C. Pogonowski, '“Holocaust profiteers”, Żydzi, Arabowie, Polacy i Murzyni w oczach amerykańskiego imperium, czyli dżungla w wielkim świecie', *Nasz Dziennik*, 272: 19 Nov. 2002, p. 8.

<sup>98</sup> J. L. Szcześniak, 'Antypolonizm for the young ones', *Nasz Dziennik*, 156: 6 July 2001, pp. 10-11.

<sup>99</sup> 'Religia wypędzonych', *Nasz Dziennik*, 288: 11 Dec. 2003, p. 16.

<sup>100</sup> 'Telefon zaufania', *Nasz Dziennik*, 144: 22 June 2004, p. 16.



a collaborator will lead to abuse and distortion of history in the face of which the IPN will be completely helpless. At the same time some authors were outraged that a similar action was not taking place in Germany.<sup>101</sup> Author A. Hojda saw evidence of anti-Polonism in the fact that no money was offered for ‘pointing out the Germans who murdered Jews.’<sup>102</sup>

*Nasz Dziennik*’s reporting on the ‘Last Chance’ action was inconsistent as first of all it made a great point to report that Poland was the only country to be subjected to the Wiesenthal Centre’s action<sup>103</sup>, only to report soon after that the ‘Jewish hunters’ from the Centre spread the action in Hungary, Lithuania, Romania, Austria and Croatia<sup>104</sup> Also it did not explain how the powerful claims movement did not prevent the action being stopped in Hungary.<sup>105</sup>

An article with a title that resembles one of a war report – ‘The “Holocaust industry” attacks’ claimed that the Wiesenthal Centre’s action was only a pretext. Essentially, the Centre wanted to promote the movement proclaiming the ‘ideology that considers the Jewish suffering as unique [...] while the suffering of other nations is considered as less important.’<sup>106</sup> And all this to ‘swindle billions of dollars out of impoverished countries’ according to the mantra that ‘the Holocaust was a great tragedy and...a great business.’<sup>107</sup> And in this business the Jews were said to raise the ‘accusations that the Poles are equally guilty as the Germans.’ A personal touch was added with a story of N. G. Finkelstein’s mother, a Holocaust survivor whose ‘compensation amounted only to one hour of work of a lawyer from the organization’. In the familiar move of throwing back the hot potato of guilt unto the Jews the author asked, ‘where is the help line [to point out] the Jews who used to work for the UB?’<sup>108</sup>

A reader’s comment on the Centre’s action that ‘Jews hold double standards, [...] they distort the truth’ and ‘Jewish chauvinistic circles stir up a witch-hunt against Poland and the Poles’ took on a new twist when the author stated: ‘While they plunder Palestine

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<sup>101</sup> A. Hojda, ‘Niuanse sprawiedliwości’, *Nasz Dziennik*, 145: 23 June 2004, p. 16.

<sup>102</sup> A. Hojda, ‘Wybiórcze ściganie’, *Nasz Dziennik*, 177: 30 July 2004, p. 16.

<sup>103</sup> A. Hojda, ‘Antipolonizm, docenianie inaczej’, *Nasz Dziennik*, 150: 29 June 2004, p. 16.

<sup>104</sup> W. Sidor, ‘Sprzeciw wobec żydowskich „tropicieli”’, *Nasz Dziennik*, 172: 24- 25 July 2004, pp. 1, 9.

<sup>105</sup> ‘Węgry. Zablokowali Żydowską akcję’, *Nasz Dziennik*, 174: 27 July 2004, p. 5.

<sup>106</sup> S. Surdy, ‘“Przedsięwzięcie holokaustu” atakuje’, *Nasz Dziennik*, 146: 24 June 2004, p. 10.

<sup>107</sup> Ibid.

<sup>108</sup> Ibid.



they want property back in Poland'.<sup>109</sup> On another occasion it was the situation in the Middle East and the bad image of Israel that 'should decrease the greed of the Holocaust industry'.<sup>110</sup>

Plans to erect the Museum of the History of Polish Jews, already mentioned in articles in 2001, continued to stir up emotions even more in 2003 and in the run-up to the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz in 2005. While in 2001 alleged claims of compensation for Jedwabne were an illustration of the greed of the Jewish claims movement, later the Museum of the History of Polish Jews, became a prime example of the Holocaust industry putting down roots in Poland. The Museum, though still existing only on paper, soon became a symbol of Jewish attempts to falsify history, especially that of World War II and of Polish-Jewish relations during the Nazi occupation in particular. As it is often the case in *Nasz Dziennik* an essay by the chief ideologist of the newspaper was followed by shorter articles and passing remarks in texts on other matters, and all the points have been echoed by the readers in their letters. In the article 'Ejszyszki and the vicious circle of falsifications' I. C. Pogonowski voices his concern that:

The new and colossal Museum of Jewish History in Warsaw is supposed to be an important centre of propaganda in the Jewish claims movement. It can be expected of this institution to [present] propaganda of a falsified version of the so-called pogrom in Kielce on 4 July 1946, as well as of Jewish losses during the tragic struggles of the Home Army with the Soviet terror apparatus in Ejszyszki. These two tragic events, unfortunately in a falsified form, are the main themes in the exhibitions not only in the Holocaust Museum in Washington, but in all the museums of the holocaust of the Jews that are known to me.<sup>111</sup>

What we see in this article is the author's fear that not so glorious moments in Polish history will be on display in the centre of Warsaw for all the public, especially the foreign guests to see. He also added a comment exposing Jews as enemies of Poland: 'Jews often saw the Polish struggle for freedom as contradictory to their interests, showing their anger because of it'. The article was illustrated by a cartoon with a tear coming down on

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<sup>109</sup> M. Czarkowski (reader), 'Wokół Centrum Wiesenthala', *Nasz Dziennik*, 145: 23 June 2004, p. 15.

<sup>110</sup> A. Lewandowski, 'Wyszło sztydło z worka', *Nasz Dziennik*, 260: 7 Nov. 2003, p. 16.

<sup>111</sup> I. C. Pogonowski, 'Ejszyszki i błędne koło fałszów', *Nasz Dziennik*, 122: 27 May 2003, p. 10.



a cheek, the further it goes the higher the number of dollars – an allusion to well calculated grief of the Jews.

In another article Pogonowski alleged that ‘often in Jewish publications we see nonsense assertions that Jews lived in Poland earlier than the Slavs’<sup>112</sup> and that the Museum of the History of Polish Jews will distort the historical truth by repeating such nonsense. The article’s title ‘A guest not a host’ summarized the author’s and the newspaper’s attitude that refuses a Jew to be perceived as a Pole as well. Also, Pogonowski made a comparison between the plans for the Jewish Museum and the lack of a fitting tribute to the Katyń victims; he shifted onto Jews responsibility for the lack of funds in the latter. This is a typical example not only of rivalry over suffering, but also over the remembrance of suffering. An act of commemoration of the Jews is seen as a threat to the Polish remembrance.

Elsewhere, Pogonowski managed to link the Jewish Museum to the war in Iraq. The link between the two was that both were imposed by the Zionists’ demands and the Poles have to pay for both, as the Museum is another burden on the Polish taxpayer while in Iraq Poles shed blood in the interest of Israel.<sup>113</sup> The author also talked about the ‘Holocaust myth’ that ‘grew out of the Jewish claims movement.’ By the term myth he does not mean that the Holocaust is a fabrication of the Jewish imagination; the myth in his understanding is its uniqueness.

Jan Kowalski struck an ironic note while expressing his astonishment that millions are being spent for the Jewish Museum while there is no money in the budget for anything.<sup>114</sup> Again, in the article we see an attempt to diminish the uniqueness of the Holocaust; ‘Jews are lucky. Even a point of view about history brings them a fortune.’ Sarcastic comments were meant to illustrate the power of Jews; ‘When Jews nicely ask, one cannot say no, unless one is an antisemite or wants to be one’, and ‘no one wants to be an antisemite unless he is a Jew.’ The worries over the financial aspect of the plans to build the Museum of the History of Polish Jews in Warsaw are echoed in a reader’s letter

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<sup>112</sup> I. C. Pogonowski, ‘Gość, a nie gospodarz’, *Nasz Dziennik*, 115: 19 May 2003, p. 10.

<sup>113</sup> I. C. Pogonowski, ‘Siła euro, Unia i żądania syjonistów’, *Nasz Dziennik*, 107: 5 May 2003, p. 9.

<sup>114</sup> J. Kowalski, ‘Gmina Gminie’, *Nasz Dziennik*, 140: 17 June 2003, p. 16.



‘perhaps it is needed, but there are more needy causes [...] hungry people do not think about culture’.<sup>115</sup>

It is worth noting that similarly *Nasz Dziennik* criticized the plans to set up in Ukraine the Holocaust Museum of Jews and Ukrainians. Here the fact that the venture, at a cost of 3.5 million USD will be totally financed by Jewish circles was not praiseworthy either. The author suggested that it will seriously compromise the objectivity of presenting history as ‘Surely Jewish collaboration with the Soviets will not be examined’ and ‘UPA [Ukrainian Insurgent Army] members will be treated as victims on a par with those whom they helped to murder’.<sup>116</sup>

A feeling of hurt and injustice reverberated from the article of Waldemar Marszewski ‘Memorial to honour murdered Jews becomes more and more expensive’.<sup>117</sup> The author was outraged at the 50 million DM memorial investment in Berlin and suggested that ‘some Jewish groups’ imposed this on the city council. By contrast the reader was informed about the negative attitude of the German government to numerous requests to build a memorial for the Polish victims of Nazism. Later we were informed about another scandal concerning the Berlin memorial, as the ‘German company Degussa that is blamed for producing Zyklon B, will build the holocaust memorial in Berlin’.<sup>118</sup> Again Jews are reported to have no moral scruples.

While *Nasz Dziennik* questioned the necessity to build the Museum of the History of Polish Jews, plans to build a memorial of KL Warschau [Konzentrationslager Warschau – Warsaw concentration camp] were pressed as of urgent need and a great importance. In this case there was no mention of prioritizing hospitals and schools... This was not surprising, as KL Warschau became for *Nasz Dziennik* a new symbol of Polish martyrdom. According to the newspaper’s experts KL Warschau was a concentration/death camp in the middle of Warsaw, of which the extermination machine claimed the lives of 200,000 Polish civilians. *Nasz Dziennik* argued that the truth about KL Warschau was never revealed to the wider public as the Soviets in 1945 took over the camp together with its crematories and used it to further persecute the Poles. IPN has not

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<sup>115</sup> J. Zakrzewski (reader), ‘Pierwsza potrzeba’, *Nasz Dziennik*, 29: 4 Feb. 2005, p. 13.

<sup>116</sup> E. Tuzow-Lubański, ‘Wybiórcza pamięć’, *Nasz Dziennik*, 243: 17 Oct. 2003, p. 15.

<sup>117</sup> W. Marszewski, ‘Pomnik ku czci pomordowanych Żydów coraz droższy’, *Nasz Dziennik*, 19: 23 Jan. 2002, p. 10.



confirmed those claims, earning again fierce criticism from *Nasz Dziennik*. As in the case of the Jewish Museum this topic links two themes: the competition of suffering and the theme of Jews falsifying history. Why would the Jews need to falsify the history of KL Warschau? Judge Maria Trzcińska, who was in charge of examining the case of the Konzentrationslager Warschau claims that the death camp in Warsaw that exterminated thousands of Poles ‘does not fit into the version of history written anew, that only accepts martyrdom of the Jews.’<sup>119</sup>

KL Warschau as non-existent in the collective memory or historiography opened new ways of shaping this memory and *Nasz Dziennik* was quick to seize this opportunity.<sup>120</sup> Unlike Auschwitz, which despite the efforts of authors Terlecki and Surdy cannot be easily re-claimed to be a symbol of Polish martyrdom, KL Warschau is like a new continent and since the newspaper was the first to ‘discover’ it, it can exploit it as it pleases. For once the Poles will have their own, separate and exclusive site of martyrdom without any need to share it; be it with the Jews or anybody else. What is more, KL Warschau in *Nasz Dziennik*’s accounts is a symbol that unites the persecutions of the Poles by both the Nazis and the Soviets. Therefore, *Nasz Dziennik* launches a campaign led by Judge Maria Trzcińska to erect a fitting monument to commemorate the camp on the site where the committee already erected a cross and set a corner stone.<sup>121</sup> The need to see a ‘Polish’ site commemorating the ‘Polish Holocaust’ with a sign of the cross in my view is a backlash first of all against the removal of the crosses from Auschwitz, secondly against the Jedwabne memorial. It expresses the need of the readership to have a commemorative event and a site that would recover the image of Poles as heroic victims. In addition, the KL Warschau theme is a response to the accusations that Polish civilians stood by and watched Jews perish. This accusation hit especially hard the Warsaw citizens who watched the dramatic plight of the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising and then fought in the Warsaw Uprising. In the version of history written by *Nasz Dziennik*,

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<sup>118</sup> “Aj waj!”, ‘Interes przede wszystkim’, *Nasz Dziennik*, 266: 15-16 Nov. 2003, p. 28.

<sup>119</sup> ‘Pomnik musi stanąć’, *Nasz Dziennik*, 296: 18-19 Dec. 2004, pp. 14-15.

<sup>120</sup> KL Warschau exists in the cyberspace, for example an article on the Wikipedia portal mixes the controversial claims with those from IPN findings. This and various links to the articles on the Holocaust give ‘good credentials’ to the claims that gas chambers were used in this camp. See: [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Warsaw\\_concentration\\_camp](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Warsaw_concentration_camp)

<sup>121</sup> ‘Pomnik musi stanąć’, *Nasz Dziennik*, 296: 18-19 Dec. 2004, pp. 14-15.



when Jews were perishing the Warsawians were not idle, riding a merry-go-around as Miłosz or Błoński discussed it.<sup>122</sup> They were being gassed to death in KL Warschau.

The main authority on the subject of KL Warschau is Prof. J. Moor-Jankowski, during the Nazi occupation a fighter of the underground, who was a prisoner of the KL Warschau. The newspaper published his speech given in 2004 at the celebrations of Holocaust Memorial Day in the USA, when Prof. J. Moor-Jankowski was said to have addressed 600 government employees. The title of his speech/article – ‘Polish holocaust’<sup>123</sup> made a poignant statement and was in line with the newspaper’s persistent tendency to reclaim the title Holocaust and to challenge the claim that the extermination of the Jews was unique.

Moor-Jankowski asserted that ‘the Holocaust of the non-Jews in Poland is in the West practically not known.’ and then proceeded to list details of persecutions on the Poles. He also stressed that ‘Birkenau was firstly built for the Poles and Russians’ and that ‘transports and murdering of the Poles in Auschwitz were happening in parallel to the action of the extermination of the Jews’. He also wrote about his imprisonment in KL Warschau. Although the article was meant to illustrate that the Poles were also the victims of the Holocaust we come across in the biographical section about the author an unusual sentence ‘he was organising escapes of Poles-Christians and Poles-Jews’. This equation shows that Jews could have been Poles as well is not met elsewhere in *Nasz Dziennik*, that holds on to the view that Jews were ‘The Other’, a foreign influence and essentially only guests in Poland. So why was such a conflicting view included? In my opinion it should be only read as a personal view of Prof. J. Moor-Jankowski, he was allowed to differ on that matter as his testimony about KL Warschau is of crucial importance to *Nasz Dziennik*. Pogonowski’s view that Jews were guests not hosts still stands as a general line of the newspaper on this issue.

In his other articles and interviews Prof. J. Moor-Jankowski, stands out from the regular contributors of *Nasz Dziennik* by mentioning Jewish suffering: he talked about Nazis tormenting Chassids<sup>124</sup> and German hunts on Jews.<sup>125</sup> Declaring ‘I was saved

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<sup>122</sup> For a translation of C. Miłosz’s poem ‘Campo di fiori’ and J. Błoński’s article ‘The Poor Poles look at the Ghetto, see A. Polonsky (ed.), ‘*My brother’s keeper?*’..., pp. 34-53.

<sup>123</sup> J. Moor-Jankowski, ‘Polski holocaust’, *Nasz Dziennik*, 178: 31 July-1 Aug. 2004, pp.14, 15.

<sup>124</sup> J. Moor-Jankowski, ‘Byłem więźniem KL Warschau’, *Nasz Dziennik*, 229: 29 Sep. 2004, p. 11.



because I did not have a badge like the Jews were wearing' he gave a testimony that the fate of Jews and Poles in occupied Poland was different. Nevertheless, this personal experience did not stop him from trying to compare those fates as if they were very similar. He struck a familiar note of accusing Jews of 'lack of gratitude for those who were hiding the Jews' and painted an idyllic picture without a trace of antisemitism; 'Jews [in the Ghetto Uprising] sang a Polish hymn, there was no hatred'.<sup>126</sup> But despite those comments I think that Moor-Jankowski's statements should be treated essentially as sentimentss as opposed to ideology, here we have someone who suffered and who wants this suffering to be acknowledged.<sup>127</sup>

Nevertheless chief publicists of *Nasz Dziennik* quickly transformed the subjective feelings of a witness into ideology. In his verbal fight for 'Poland to be Poland', Father Prof. C. Bartnik coined something that almost sounds like a slogan 'KL Warschau crematories for Poles'<sup>128</sup>, which horrifyingly reminds us of the slogan 'Poland for Poles' used by Polish neo-Nazi groups. Though the two are not thematically connected, Bartnik's statement, because of the linguistic similarity, evokes macabre connotations that Jews and Poles not only cannot share the homeland but even they require separate crematories and sites of martyrdom. In his article we come across another counterattack to the Jedwabne case in the words 'Jews want to show that only Jews perished in Poland and that rather at the hands of Poles.' Also, Bartnik tried to make Poles into doubly victimized, this time financially, as 'We did not get the reparations from the Germans, but the Jews got 200 billion dollars.'<sup>129</sup>

Finally, the theme of KL Warschau was exploited in order to discredit the media that 'ignored the anniversary of establishing KL Warschau' and to make them into accomplices of those who 'deceive the world that in the concentration camps perished representatives of only one nation.'<sup>130</sup>

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<sup>125</sup> J. Moor-Jankowski, 'Na lewych papierach', *Nasz Dziennik*, 230: 30 Sep. 2004, p. 11.

<sup>126</sup> J. Moor-Jankowski, 'Byłem więźniem KL Warschau', *Nasz Dziennik*, 229: 29 Sep. 2004, p. 11.

<sup>127</sup> J. Moor-Jankowski, 'To był obóz zagłady', *Nasz Dziennik*, 261: 6-7 Nov. 2004, p. 18.

<sup>128</sup> C. Bartnik, '...żeby Polska była Polską', *Nasz Dziennik*, 261: 6-7 Nov. 2004, pp. 12-13.

<sup>129</sup> Ibid.

<sup>130</sup> G. Fafałka, 'Biała plama', *Nasz Dziennik*, 240: 12 Oct. 2004, p. 16.



The very term ‘Holocaust’ as well as other expressions that describe the extermination of six million Jews by Nazis can reveal a person’s attitude to this crime.<sup>131</sup> How we describe this atrocity shows how we choose to commemorate it. Years after the pictures of the liberated camps and survivors appeared in the papers, the world started to grasp the scale and uniqueness of the crime committed against Jews, but there was no fitting word for it. Gradually in many languages a Greek term ‘holocaust’, unfortunately loaded with religious connotations, began to be used. Hebrew speakers prefer the term ‘Shoah’. French speakers also seem to prefer this term, not so much to avoid recalling the idea of a sacrifice to gods, but more to avoid the troublesome ‘h’ sound. Very similarly, in the Polish language rules of phonetics and grammar dictate the choice of the word, even at the expense of losing the desired implications. Although both terms Holocaust and Shoah are used in Polish, especially as they mark out the described crime as special, different or even unique. ‘Holocaust’ as a noun declines through all the cases but in some sounds very rusty and unnatural, for example about the Holocaust in Polish – ‘o Holokauście’. ‘Shoah’ does not decline at all which makes its use even more peculiar from a grammatical point of view. The general public is not so much familiar with the term Shoah. However, among lecturers and students of the subject, Shoah seems to be a very popular term, as it is perceived to show superiority of those who ‘are in the know’. Finally, a third, ‘native’ term is in use – ‘Zagłada’ literally meaning extermination, destruction and in biology extinction; spelled with capital ‘Z’ is usually used as a phrase ‘Zagłada Żydów’. It is the best term to use for linguistic purists, however it does not denote uniqueness of the crime as much as ‘Holocaust’ does.

*Nasz Dziennik* uses all three terms, although it is very inconsistent with the spelling; in quotations Holocaust, Shoah and Zagłada begin with capital letters, however in most authors’ texts they do not, unless they are used in reference to such phenomena as the ‘Holocaust industry’ or ‘Shoah business’. In the newspaper’s campaign to defeat the idea of uniqueness of the Holocaust, the authors conveniently use the foreignness of the words Holocaust and Shoah to underline the artificiality of the ideas that stand behind

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<sup>131</sup> Some scholars reject the term ‘Holocaust’ altogether and refer to ‘Nazi genocide’ instead. For Henry Friedlander this was motivated by the argument to extend the scope of the victims to Roma and mentally and physically disabled. See: H. Friedlander, *The Origins of Nazi Genocide: From Euthanasia to the Final Solution*, (Chapel Hill and London, 1995).



these terms. The foreign words imposed on the Polish language are supposed to parallel the strange and uncomfortable idea of uniqueness of the extermination of the Jews that is perceived as imposed on the Poles and on Polish history. The grammatical clash happens to illustrate the clash between the Polish and Jewish suffering.

Paradoxically, some authors seem to reclaim the term Holocaust by extending it to Poles as well. Moor-Jankowski in his recollections about KL Warschau writes about the 'Polish holocaust'.<sup>132</sup> So here we see an idea of equating Polish and Jewish suffering, as he wants to show that there was Nazi extermination of the Jews just as Nazi extermination of the Poles. Other authors also extend the meaning of the term Holocaust to 'include the Poles [as its victims]'.<sup>133</sup>

However, many more authors want to free the term 'holocaust' from any exclusive connotation with the Nazi crimes. In their texts 'holocaust' means an extermination of any distinct group of people, ethnic, religious or even social, hence the spelling with the small 'h'. In this understanding of the term there is no time boundary as they refer to holocausts that happened before World War II; for example Prof. Bartnik writes about 'the holocaust of Catholics' in France at the end of the 17<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>134</sup>

In asserting that Jews have no right to claim uniqueness of suffering journalists of *Nasz Dziennik* become activists of the cause of commemorating various persecuted groups. S. Surdy asks 'Where is a museum for the Gypsies? Indians? Blacks?' He also wants the world to be reminded that the 'Chinese "holocaust" is forgotten [despite] millions who were exterminated.'<sup>135</sup>

Despite all the above *Nasz Dziennik* refuses to detach the emotional weight from the term Holocaust and puts limits to the universalisation of the application of this term. It criticized the campaign of PETA, which used a film that 'compares conditions of animal transport to that of 'holocaust of people [ludność] during World War II.'<sup>136</sup> On the other hand, it is precisely this emotional baggage of the term Holocaust that *Nasz Dziennik* exploits when it comes to a very important moral issue for the newspaper –

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<sup>132</sup> J. Moor-Jankowski, 'Polski holocaust', *Nasz Dziennik*, 178: 31 July-1 Aug. 2004, pp. 14-15.

<sup>133</sup> J. Bajda, ' "Nigdy więcej!" Nigdy więcej?', *Nasz Dziennik*, 30: 5-6 Feb. 2005, p. 12-13.

<sup>134</sup> C. Bartnik, 'Diabeł "laicki" ', *Nasz Dziennik*, 44: 21-22 Feb. 2004, p. 21.

<sup>135</sup> S. Surdy, 'Meandry pamięci i niepamięci', *Nasz Dziennik*, 169: 15 July 2004, p. 11.

<sup>136</sup> J. Kowalski, 'Nie zjadać zwierząt', *Nasz Dziennik*, 165: 17 July 2003, p. 16.



abortion. With the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz *Nasz Dziennik* strengthened its pro-life campaign with headlines: ‘Holocaust of the unborn children’<sup>137</sup> or ‘abortion – holocaust of the innocent children.’<sup>138</sup> Many more articles compared what happened in Auschwitz to the abortions,<sup>139</sup> Father Prof. Bajda equated even the ideology behind the two: ‘The same principles were used in [killing] the unborn as towards the Jews during Hitler’s holocaust.’<sup>140</sup> In this campaign *Nasz Dziennik* was able to claim that it has the greatest Pole on its side as John Paul II in his book *Memory and Identity* also compared killing of the unborn children to the Holocaust.<sup>141</sup>

The question remains: Did *Nasz Dziennik* use the word ‘holocaust’ following the pro-life campaigns in the English speaking countries? Or did it make a conscious decision to use ‘holocaust’ instead of ‘zagłada’ because the former evokes more vividly the Nazi crimes? In my opinion it was the latter and is one of many inconsistencies found in the newspaper. Despite all the talk about the universality of human suffering *Nasz Dziennik* still holds on to the idea that the Holocaust was unique. Not out of sympathy for Jewish suffering but out of interest to claim at least a part of this uniqueness of the Holocaust for the Polish victims of the Nazi crimes. For *Nasz Dziennik* Nazi crimes per se are unique as far as those committed on Poles are treated equally to those committed on Jews. Whenever the latter under the name Holocaust gain more importance the newspaper attacks the Jews for making their suffering unique. There is no danger that this inconsistency will make the readers see the Polish suffering as less unique, because the reader is reminded that Poles suffered ‘double the amount’ – from Germans and the Soviets. By contrast Jews ‘only’ suffered from the Germans while, as we are constantly reminded by *Nasz Dziennik*, they were the perpetrators in the Soviet regime.

As we have seen above, the Holocaust, meaning extermination and suffering of the Jews, is a very marginal topic for *Nasz Dziennik*. In the abundance of articles I only found five cases when the suffering of Jews and their distinctly tragic fate was acknowledged. All of them were only brief messages; contained in one sentence, always immediately ‘balanced’ by depictions of Jews as villains, especially in the Soviet crimes

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<sup>137</sup> M. Kuczyński (reader), ‘Holokaust dzieci poczętych’, *Nasz Dziennik*, 39: 16 Feb. 2005, p. 15.

<sup>138</sup> K. and J. Bulakowie, ‘Aborcja – holokaust niewinnych dzieci’, *Nasz Dziennik*, 49: 28 Feb. 2005, p. 10

<sup>139</sup> ‘Double standards’, *Nasz Dziennik*, 22: 27 Jan. 2005, p. 2

<sup>140</sup> J. Bajda, ‘“Nigdy więcej!” Nigdy więcej?’, *Nasz Dziennik*, 30: 5-6 Feb. 2005, pp. 12-13.



context. Most articles are a negative response to the notion that the Holocaust was unique. Such claims are labelled as falsifications of history designed to deceive the world so the Jews can manipulate current affairs and obtain hefty damages even from such innocent nations as the Poles. Rather than talking about the Holocaust itself the newspaper focuses on 'how do the Jews make money out of the Holocaust'.

Also, the Holocaust is a contentious topic for the publicists of *Nasz Dziennik* as the image of the Jews as victims is not in accordance with that presented by the paper of deceivers, perpetrators and bloodsuckers. In addition, the immensity of the Jewish suffering during World War II does not sit easily with the presented image of Polish unique martyrdom. This attitude is a reflection of the general one taken by a substantial part of Polish society and despite earlier predictions over the past ten years this attitude is shared by more and more Poles across the whole of the social spectrum. In 1992 as much as 38% of Poles rejected the idea of Jewish unique suffering; 32% equated the suffering of Jews with that of Poles, 6% thought that the Poles suffered more than others, 46% accepted the uniqueness of the Jewish suffering.<sup>142</sup> When I. Krzemiński repeated his survey in 2002 he found out that despite a number of important discussions that took place in the media regarding the Holocaust the number of those equating Jewish suffering with the Polish one rose to almost 47% while those who think that Poles suffered more during the war than the Jews now amounts to 10%. At the same time the number of those putting the Jewish suffering above the Polish one fell to 38%. The tendency to equate the suffering was shown even among the group identified as philosemites.<sup>143</sup> In 1992 many Poles were more hesitant about measuring the suffering of the two nations, 12% answered that it is hard to compare the suffering of the two, while ten years later only 3.3% expressed such concerns. This shows that during those years the majority of Poles had time to form strong views on the topic.<sup>144</sup>

Krzemiński's research confirms that the views regarding the Holocaust that are expressed by the publicists and readers of *Nasz Dziennik* reflect those of a considerable

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<sup>141</sup> 'Brutalny atak na Papieża', *Nasz Dziennik*, 45: 23 Feb. 2005, p. 7.

<sup>142</sup> I. Krzemiński, *Czy Polacy są antysemitami?*, (Warsaw, 1996), p. 98.

<sup>143</sup> As Lars Fischer demonstrated in his latest research antisemites and philosemites may share many prejudices about the Jews what distinguishes them is how they decide to act on them, see: L. Fischer, *The Socialist Response to Antisemitism in Imperial Germany*, (Cambridge, 2007).

<sup>144</sup> I. Krzemiński, *Antysemityzm w Polsce i na Ukrainie*, (Warsaw, 2004), p. 120.



part of Polish society. Significantly, the high percentage of those who put Polish suffering above the Jewish one or who tend to equate the two can be found in the group of Radio Maryja listeners. (Sociologically the group of *Nasz Dziennik* readers is a smaller group within that of the Radio Maryja listeners. A Radio Maryja listener is most likely to buy *Nasz Dziennik*. However, even those listeners who do not buy the newspaper are likely to be familiar with the views of its main publicists as the station broadcasts many of the articles. And *vice versa* many interviews, homilies and other broadcasts of Radio Maryja are printed in *Nasz Dziennik*.) Over the past ten years, besides the Jedwabne debate and educational programmes about the Holocaust for school children, many discussions and initiatives have been taking place in the public realm in Poland to promote the knowledge about the Jewish suffering and extermination by Nazis during the occupation. However, Krzemiński's data from 2002 shows that we can see a polarisation of attitudes towards the Jews and that despite those initiatives the number of those equating Jewish and Polish suffering increased. Of course there is a number of explanations that may account for this, but first of all I would like to point to the most prosaic one. The festivals, workshops, lectures, media debates and documentaries gather the audience of those who are already interested in the topic – the philosemites. What are the odds that a pensioner from a small village in the East of Poland will tune in to the late night re-screening of Lanzmann's *Shoah* or buy a specialist periodical exploring complexities of Polish-Jewish relations? Similarly, no anniversary celebration with heads of state making speeches will change deeply held convictions and dispel old myths. At the same time those who miss the debates initiated by liberal intellectuals are targeted with a media of nationalistic leaning/agenda.

Radio Maryja is by far the leader in the race to win over the minds of the common people. However, we have to keep in mind that it is not just a radio that gathers a wide popular interest (between 1,5 up to 3 million listeners), it is a phenomenon and a social institution with clubs of its devoted supporters in every parish. Most important, the devotion of those people focuses on the radio's director Father T. Rydzyk. To his critics he might be a megalomaniac whose pompous rhetoric makes him a grotesque figure, but Father Rydzyk is a leader like no other leader on the Polish public scene because he speaks the language of the masses. So do his brainchildren Radio Maryja, *Nasz Dziennik*



and television TRWAM; they communicate so well with their audiences because they meet the recipient of their message on his ground – intellectually, emotionally and spiritually. Paradoxically, the public television that is serious to fulfil its educational role often over- intellectualises its programmes, making them inaccessible to those who really need the information. The simplicity of the style and content of *Nasz Dziennik*'s articles or the Radio's broadcasts make them a choice of the less educated reader. All that without a stigma or feeling of being patronised as those media keep up the appearance of being intellectual and serious; for example, many articles published in the newspaper are written by people holding high academic titles, they often quote foreign journals as their very names lend the newspaper respectability. As for the spiritual aspect of communication of those media, I think it is the most important one as it gives unquestioned credentials to the editors. By constantly making references to God, praying with the listener or printing images that the reader considers holy these media give themselves a stamp of approval. The very name of Radio Maryja suggests that it is the radio of the Holy Virgin Mary, the point that its director often makes and exploits. Good credentials, in this case even a divine one, are essential for the audience that for years of Communist regime learned to mistrust the media. So we should not be surprised that in order to account for the increase of antisemitic attitudes and those belittling the Jewish suffering Krzemiński puts forward a hypothesis that the creation of powerful media such as Radio Maryja preserves those attitudes against the predictions that they should drop<sup>145</sup>

I would add that the public discussions on the subject of the Holocaust and especially the Jedwabne murders seriously challenged the self-image of the Poles. A large proportion of society found it unsettling and was eager to accept the arguments of nationalistic media that preserved not only the honour and good image of Poland, but the nation's status of being a victim. It is very telling that this fierce competition over who suffered more began in *Nasz Dziennik* in 2001 when the Jedwabne murder was brought into public discussion.

The constant juxtaposition of the Holocaust and 'Jewish crimes' during the Soviet occupation and Stalinisation of Poland are also a sign of self-defence in the face of Jedwabne world publicity. The attitude of *Nasz Dziennik* and that of many Poles is to

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<sup>145</sup> Ibid, p. 32



look for a villain that would outclass the Jedwabne crime. Of course the newspaper believes that Nazis were the murderers in Jedwabne while it might admit that some Polish scum aided them. But the expectation is that since the Jews were ready to make such a great fuss of this event, in turn they have to be prepared to apologise for the Soviet occupation, Stalinisation and many crimes of the Communist apparatus in Poland and elsewhere. In the newspaper's outlook the villains wanted to pose as victims by bringing out the Jedwabne case, but their crimes are not forgotten. This line of argument taken up by the right-wing milieu resembles the *Historikerstreit* – the Historians' Debate in Germany that erupted in 1986.<sup>146</sup> Ernst Nolte attempted to explain the Holocaust as a product of anxiety about the 'Judeo-Bolshevik' precedence of mass annihilation.<sup>147</sup> His relativisation of Nazi crimes parallels that of *Nasz Dziennik* which portrays all Jews as Communist sympathizers and assigns to the Jedwabne victims a role of Soviet collaborators.

Summing up, *Nasz Dziennik* vividly recalls the events and atrocities that happened in Poland during World War II, but the compassion and personal details are only reserved for ethnic Poles. The greatest atrocity, the Holocaust, is only reluctantly recalled when the Jews themselves bring it up. But even then Jewish remembrance is viewed through the lens of antisemitism and accused of hidden agenda blackmailing the Poles and impoverishing them. Before the war most of Jews and Poles led parallel lives, today historians like those publishing in *Nasz Dziennik* write parallel history, in their textbooks even the Holocaust is not a crossing/meeting point.<sup>iii</sup>

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<sup>i</sup> Original spelling, despite the convention in Polish to spell Shoah with a capital 'S'. However the paper sometimes keeps the conventional spelling Holocaust with a capital 'H'.

<sup>ii</sup> The term *Zagłada* spelled with capital 'Z' in Polish is interchangeable with the terms Holocaust and Shoah. *Nasz Dziennik* uses it in reference to Poles as well as Jews, but in neither case uses the capital 'Z', thus I chose the English term 'destruction' to denote the paper's agenda to avoid denoting the uniqueness of the Holocaust.

<sup>iii</sup> The use of Holocaust language and imagery in the context of the Middle East conflict will be discussed separately in the chapter Israel. Also, some of the Holocaust themes will be echoed in the chapter which deals with the returning of the Jewish property.

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<sup>146</sup> P. Baldwin (ed.), *Reworking the Past. Hitler, the Holocaust and the Historians' Debate*, (Boston, 1990).

<sup>147</sup> E. Nolte, 'Between Myth and Revisionism', in H.W. Koch (ed.), *Aspects of the Third Reich*, (New York, 1985), pp. 17-38.



## Chapter III

### Jewish property restitution

‘Post-German’ house, ‘post-Jewish’ shop, ‘post-Russian’ army base – these clumsy terms in the Polish language are so commonly used that they no longer sound odd.<sup>1</sup> They have become a linguistic legacy of the country’s troubled history. Their common use shows that those have lived in a post-Jewish or post-German property for years are unable to claim its full ownership, though often legally they are their rightful owners. This psychological discomfort or even anxiety that one day someone will come back to claim what once was his, can easily be exploited by those who hold anti-Jewish or anti-German prejudice.<sup>2</sup>

For several years religious institutions, among others the Roman Catholic Church and the Jewish religious community, on the basis of the legislation from 1997, have claimed back places of worship and charitable institutions. Moreover, individual Jews who were Polish citizens or their heirs, try to reclaim their property just as other Poles do, though Poland has yet to agree on individual restitution legislation. In *Nasz Dziennik*, when the subject of the Holocaust is brought up, the theme of post-Jewish property comes back like a leitmotif in over-increasing speculations about ‘the plundering raid on Poland’ (see chapter: II). The newspaper is so anxious about the fact of the Jewish religious community [Związek Gmin Wyznaniowych Żydowskich, thereafter ZGWŻ] recovering property that information about such cases is published on the front page.

The prime concern of *Nasz Dziennik* is that the Jewish community somehow abuses the legislation on restitution of property. The title of an article by Mieczysław Pabis, ‘Tenements as a present’,<sup>3</sup> made a clear suggestion that the religious Jewish community does not rightfully claim back its property. So, the reader may assume that claims are made groundlessly, because it is not necessary to have rights to a present in order to receive it. The article explained in detail the legal basis for restitution of property that applies to religious communities. The legislation on the relations between the state and the religious Jewish community’s religious organisations from

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<sup>1</sup> In Polish ‘poniemicki’, ‘pożydowski’, ‘porosyjski’. In his recent book *Fear* J. T. Gross chose the word former to represent those Polish linguistic hybrids. However, I chose ‘post’ as an adequate translation of the ambiguity that those Polish terms denote.

<sup>2</sup> M. Steinlauf, *Pamięć nieprzyswojona*, (Warsaw, 2001), p. 71.

<sup>3</sup> M. Pabis, ‘Kamienice w prezencie’, *Nasz Dziennik*, 145: 24 June 2002, pp. 1, 3.



20 February 1997 was extensively quoted, as were the grounds for work of the Regulating Committee on Jewish Religious Communities. A statement from the chairman of the Committee, Andrzej Rudnicki was also included in the publication. Significantly, Rudnicki reassured that: 'There is no such possibility, to hand over a property, which did not belong previously to the Jewish community' and prior to that: 'the law about the relations between the state and the Jewish community's religious organisations is analogous to legal solutions that determine relations with the Churches, including the Roman Catholic Church'. Further, the chairman informed the reader that 146 properties that have been handed over so far legally belonged to the Jewish community. So what were those presents that made the front page headline in *Nasz Dziennik*? The answer is given by Wojciech Kozdronkiewicz, the president of the Association 'Tenants in Defence of the Law', who was indignant that thoroughly restored buildings were being handed over. The activist expressed the opinion that 'the properties should be laden with mortgage debts – if the regional authority or the Exchequer, that is to say all tax-payers, bear the repair charges, then these costs should be laid on the new owner.' This misleadingly suggested that all returned properties were renovated, which is doubtful, given that the estates in Kraków, mentioned in the article itself, were neglected buildings. More importantly, the phrase 'new owner' suggests a resentful attitude towards the rightful owners, whom it would be more fitting to describe as the 'old' owners.

The theme of the restitution of properties into which 'the Exchequer put a pretty large sum of money', was raised also in regional supplements to *Nasz Dziennik*.<sup>4</sup>

One of the first articles on the subject of Jewish property was written by Michał Putkiewicz entitled 'Próżna – the Jewish street?',<sup>5</sup> which spoke about the handing over by Martin Świącicki, mayor of Warsaw, to Ronald S. Lauder, 'the millionaire from America', two tenements in Próżna Street, to which the Lauder Foundation 'gained rights from heirs of former owners'. This event became a pretext for speculations – 'in the centre of Warsaw there comes into being a mini Jewish quarter'. It is hard to look for logic in this statement, just as two tenements can hardly be called a street, to call them a quarter, even a 'mini' one, is a wild exaggeration. Clearly the phrase assumed a further Jewish expansion in the area, though the

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<sup>4</sup> *Nasz Dziennik w Małopolsce*, 200: 4 Sep. 2002, p.1.

<sup>5</sup> M. Putkiewicz, 'Próżna ulicą żydowską?', *Nasz Dziennik*, 9: 7-8 Feb. 1998, p. 2.



newspaper presented no grounds for this assumption. Further, the article moved to the matter of the so-called Pasta building, being 'under the rule of the Jewish Nissembaum Foundation', and which the Warsaw insurgents, who recaptured it from the hands of the Germans during the Warsaw Uprising,<sup>6</sup> are trying to reclaim. The phrase 'under the rule' suggests hostility towards the current Jewish owners, who are expected to give up their right to the property because others make emotional claims to the building. The educational and charitable activities of the Lauder and Nissembaum Foundations were not explored in the article.

The most sensational reports concerned the matter of the return to the Jewish community in Poznań of the former synagogue and other former Jewish community buildings. From the article of Wojciech Wybranowski 'The Synagogue – no gesheft!'<sup>7</sup> we found out that the building 'categorically demand[ed by] the Warsaw Jewish community [Warszawski Związek Gmin Wyznaniowych Żydowskich]', was used as the municipal swimming-pool,<sup>8</sup> which 'for children living there is probably the only sports-recreational centre.' The author suggested that some secret surrounded the matter of the restitution of Jewish property. The vice-mayor of Poznań declared that: 'We have already received several motions for the restitution of Jewish property, among other things for the return of the synagogue, but it is not a large scale occurrence', but when asked about other buildings 'he excuses himself "with the lack of memory", [he] does not want to reveal any details.' Between the lines the reader was supposed to get a message that the authorities cannot be trusted on the matter of the Jewish property restitution. The author of the article claimed that the ZGWŻ representative refused to give any information about other buildings. Besides he was worried as it 'remains unclear whether children will be able to continue to use the swimming pool'. Allegedly, 'the matter of the return of the former synagogue building aroused a great deal of controversy among Poznań's councillors, who found out about it only from the journalist of *Nasz Dziennik*.' This statement ought to be read as an attempt to create sensation. If we read the article carefully, we see that the councillors did not know about the matter, because it was going to be discussed at a

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<sup>6</sup> See chapter II: Holocaust, p. 62.

<sup>7</sup> W. Wybranowski, 'Synagoga – żaden geszeft!', *Nasz Dziennik*, 132: 7 June 2001, p. 2.

<sup>8</sup> The problem of the use of places and buildings that are historical sites, often marked by suffering, is not confined to Poland. It is common that such sites get reabsorbed and adapted for ordinary purposes rather than to serve as sites of remembrance. See: J. Jordan, *Structures of Memory: Understanding Urban Change in Berlin and Beyond* (Stanford, 2006).



future session of the City Council. Nevertheless, the newspaper implied that this was only an excuse, and that the matter had been dealt with behind the back of the councillors. The statement from one of the councillors, who was concerned that the city must be prepared for 'the never-ending wave of demands, some less justified than others', highlighted the controversy of the matter. Finally, we are told that Poznań's Jews do not want the return of the former synagogue. Their voice is represented by Andrzej Beryt, the spokesman of the Israelite Community, who described it as an idea of ZGWŻ, as its authorities 'seem to think that central planning is best and that Warsaw knows best.'

The story about the insistent 'demanding attitude of ZGWŻ' continues in the article 'Poznań's *tzimmeses*'<sup>9</sup> by Wojciech Wybranowski. There we learn that ZGWŻ 'demands categorically': 'the building of PAN – modern, equipped in compliance with European standards, the building of the present State Archives, a housing complex and undeveloped grounds in the city centre.' About one third of the article was taken from the statement of Dr Olaf Bergmann about Poznań's Jews before World War II 'whose sympathies were always pro-German' and who 'after Poland regained independence were emigrating to Germany, as 'Polishness' was for them a completely exotic concept.' What has this statement in common with the matter of the restitution of Jewish properties? Perhaps by implication property of pro-German Jews should be treated as post-German property? As usual, though the author made suggestions, the reader has to arrive at his own conclusion. Summing up, Wybranowski quoted members 'of the independent Israelite Community, being in open opposition to ZGWŻ': 'We do not get involved in the restitution matters. However, the fact that former Jewish property will become property of ZGWŻ, does not mean that it will serve to preserve the heritage of Polish Jews. Rather [it will serve] making business by Warsaw. [...] Real estate in the city centre is after all for them the true *tzimmes*, the goose that lays the golden eggs.'<sup>10</sup>

The same author revealed the outcome of Poznań's case in the article 'They gave back with interest. The Jewish Centre instead of the municipal swimming pool'.<sup>11</sup> 'With interest' refers to the fact that the building was handed back without the alleged debts that the pre-war Jewish community owed the city. Wybranowski

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<sup>9</sup> W. Wybranowski, 'Poznańskie cymeszy', *Nasz Dziennik*, 139: 16-17 June 2001, p. 3.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid.

<sup>11</sup> W. Wybranowski, 'Oddali z nawiązką. Centrum Żydowskie zamiast Pływalni Miejskiej', *Nasz Dziennik*, 200: 28 Aug. 2002, pp. 1, 2.



deplored the loss of the swimming pool and underlined that the building was handed over thanks to the support of Poznań's VIPs who were invited to cultural and social events organized by the Jewish community. Once again we were informed about the pro-German sympathies of Poznań's Jews before the war. The author did not see any advantages for the city in the fact that Poznań will become the home 'of the greatest Jewish Centre in Europe.'

A year after the Poznań's synagogue was given back to the community, Wojciech Wybranowski returned to the topic with the headline ' "Tax holidays" for debtor'<sup>12</sup>. The sub-headline 'Jewish Community in Poznań takes over another building' is intended to create an impression that the Jews keep taking over more and more properties, a process that has not stopped with the synagogue building and is not likely to stop with demands for the former rabbinate building. The manipulation lies in the suggestion that the Jewish community comes up with ever-new requests. It is simply not true as *Nasz Dziennik* reported earlier, that the community demanded the return of the rabbinate building. The author was worried that the Jews 'most probably will not pay the tax on the building complex', which he found to be unjust as 'before the war the community was in debt to regional institutions in 1938 as it had to host Jewish re-emigrants from Germany and France.' The author showed great insensitivity as he ultimately suggested that debts, which were the result of Nazi persecution, should be returned to the Polish government. Even further, he denied the present Jewish community any right to the properties on the grounds that their pre-war owners allegedly showed anti-Polish attitudes. Again, we were informed that Poznań's Jews before the war were 'pro-German, sponsored a memorial for Bismarck', moreover the 1933 city's chronicle was reported to note that 'Jews had an opinion of traitors and spies.' Overall, the article created an impression that the Jewish minority gets large numbers of properties, to which their claims are dubious. Finally, we learn from LPR councillor Przemysław Piasta that this 'special treatment for the Jews' by the authorities was dictated by the fear of being accused of antisemitism.

Further, alleged injustices regarding the restitution of Jewish property were reported by Adam Białous.<sup>13</sup> He claimed that when it came to the compensations for Jewish properties 'values of properties are too high' and anyway Jews should 'ask the

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<sup>12</sup> W. Wybranowski, ' "Podatkowe wakacje" dla dłużnika', *Nasz Dziennik*, 109: 12 May 2003, pp. 1, 3.

<sup>13</sup> A. Białous, 'Liczymy się jak Żydzi', *Nasz Dziennik*, 237: 10 Oct. 2003, p. 16.



Germans for compensation.' We learned that Jewish conduct 'clearly suggests that it were not the Germans or the Soviet authorities, but the Poles who took away the Jewish property.' Also the Jews refuse to note in their calculations 'that Polish authorities have to maintain Jewish cemeteries.' This particular statement is very misleading as even in the big cities the authorities struggle to protect the Jewish cemeteries, while those countless ones in small villages slowly cease to exist due to vandalism, theft and neglect. But the author continued his sums as he postulated 'Polish authorities should get a refund for maintaining those Jewish properties.' He ended with a popular Polish proverb that has negative overtones; 'let's love each other like brothers but settle our accounts like Jews'. Another author exposed how Jews in Przemyśl and Jarosław continue taking advantage of the authorities as they 'show interest in properties only after those have been renovated at the expense of the taxpayer.'<sup>14</sup>

Already in articles referring to the Holocaust *Nasz Dziennik* suggested that Jews, primarily American Jews, exerted pressure on Poland regarding the restitution of Jewish individual property. The Jedwabne case and the accession of Poland to the EU were said to be the bidding cards of the Jewish side. In the article about the visit of PM Leszek Miller to the USA<sup>15</sup> it was claimed that the Prime Minister made some mysterious promises to the Jews.

This theme was also undertaken by Mikołaj Wójcik who was puzzled by 'the silence of the government'<sup>16</sup> about alleged promises made to foreign Jews. Wójcik reminded that 'a group of Jewish activists from the USA and Europe expects from the European Parliament, that it will resolve the quickest possible settlement of the matter of the restitution of Jewish private property in Poland.' Government representatives, the Prime Minister, and the president Alexander Kwaśniewski were often reported to give in easily to the Jewish lobbying without informing the public what promises they made. Of the president it was said that 'many times [he] announced the necessity of the settlement of property laws, but only in the context of the restitution of Jewish property.'<sup>17</sup> Accusations that some politicians put the Jewish interest first before the Polish one were also a recurring motif. About the Jewish lobbying on restitution, *Nasz*

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<sup>14</sup> M. Kamieniecki, 'Niespodziewane zainteresowanie nieruchomościami', *Nasz Dziennik*, 211: 9 Sep. 2004, p. 5.

<sup>15</sup> 'I Żyd syty, i Polak cały', *Nasz Dziennik*, 10: 12-13 Jan. 2002, p. 5.

<sup>16</sup> M. Wójcik 'Zastanawiające milczenie rządu', *Nasz Dziennik*, 64: 16-17 Mar. 2002, pp. 1, 2.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid.



*Dziennik* was already writing in 1999, but then the context was different as the claims were attributed to ‘the retaliation for the Polish stance on the matter of the papal cross on Żwirowisko’ in Auschwitz.<sup>18</sup> Later the restitution of Jewish property became a ransom for Jedwabne or a bribe to enter the EU.

In addition, *Nasz Dziennik* provides its reader with ‘background information’, not directly linked to the subject of post-Jewish property and its restitution, but information that tries to convince the reader about Jewish greed and dishonesty in money dealings. Pogonowski claimed that just as ‘often in Jewish publications we see nonsense divagations that Jews lived in Poland earlier than the Slaves’, so does the ‘Holocaust industry’ spread ‘libels on Poles’ in order to make claims for ‘imaginary property.’<sup>19</sup>

From a sermon of Father Henryk Jankowski we learned that for ‘the group of lords from Tel Aviv and Washington [...] *gesheft* is most important.’<sup>20</sup> Elsewhere, Poland’s accession to the EU is seen as an opportunity ‘so the Polish land can be sold to Germans, Dutch, Jews and others.’<sup>21</sup> In a tone that is almost aggressive, A. Hojda demonstrated that even when Jews get what they lay claim to they deceitfully come back to demand more. He reported on the case in which YIVO<sup>22</sup> prosecutes the Kościuszko Foundation<sup>23</sup> for the money that Jan Karski was supposed to leave for the Institute as his legacy, and the author maintained that the promised sum was already given during Karski’s lifetime.<sup>24</sup> Sometimes, particularly when reporting on cases of dishonesty committed by some Jews, the newspaper places two articles together so the reader can draw a conclusion from one and apply it to the other. In the article ‘Exposure of an auto-antisemite’<sup>25</sup> we read about a dishonest ‘Jewish dentist’ who set his workplace on fire and said it was an antisemitic attack in order to claim damages from an insurance company. The article was based on briefings from the Polish police investigators. Next to it appeared an article entitled ‘Jews want property restitution’,<sup>26</sup> and the data it referred to suggested that Jews make false claims for properties ‘worth

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<sup>18</sup> M. Likowski, ‘Żydowskie żądania’, *Nasz Dziennik*, 143: 22 June 1999, pp. 1, 2.

<sup>19</sup> I. C. Pogonowski, ‘Gość, a nie gospodarz’, *Nasz Dziennik*, 115: 19 May 2003, p. 10.

<sup>20</sup> H. Jankowski, ‘Europa musi być silna Bogiem’, *Nasz Dziennik*, 126: 31 May-1 June 2003, pp. 24-25.

<sup>21</sup> C. Bajda, ‘Polsko, larum grają!’, *Nasz Dziennik*, 232: 4-5 Oct. 2003, p. 20.

<sup>22</sup> The YIVO Institute for Jewish Research

<sup>23</sup> Established in USA in 1925 to promote Polish culture.

<sup>24</sup> A. Hojda, ‘Miłość po żydowsku’, *Nasz Dziennik*, 100: 28 Apr. 2004, p. 16.

<sup>25</sup> R. Motoła, ‘Wpadka autoantysemity’, *Nasz Dziennik*, 138: 14-15 June 2003, p. 5.

<sup>26</sup> Z. Baranowski, ‘Żydzi chcą restytucji mienia’, *Nasz Dziennik*, 138: 14-15 June 2003, p. 5.



about 2 billion USD.’ The conclusion about collective Jewish dishonesty was implied in this article and of course strengthened by the previous article, which encouraged a parallel that Jews accuse Poles of antisemitism in an attempt to fraudulently claim compensation or properties.

On other occasions Jewish ‘imperialistic plans to create a Greater Israel from the Nile to the Euphrates’ are supposed to be a parallel to the demands of 65 billion dollars for allegedly lost property in Poland.<sup>27</sup> It is unclear where those calculations came from, whether they are the newspaper’s own estimates. We are not informed about the sources. All the information is given in the same formula: ‘Jews demand X millions/billions of dollars’.

In articles on the Holocaust, Israel, ‘Jewish crimes’, the Jedwabne mass-murder case and miscellaneous others, the publicists of *Nasz Dziennik* contend that anti-Polish slurs are weapons of the Jewish claims movement that is greedy for millions of dollars worth of property and compensation. However, as we have seen in this chapter even *Nasz Dziennik* can come up with very few examples of controversies over the restitution of Jewish property. In order to compensate for the lack of evidence the newspaper suggests that the current claims are only a prelude to a broader attack by the claims movement. In addition, it challenges the moral grounds on which Jews should receive back their property by accusing some of being pro-German before the war. On the other hand the financial burden of the restitution is viewed as a German responsibility. Also, it continuously pictures rich Jews wanting money from the poor Polish state.

To sum up, *Nasz Dziennik* does not believe, that Jewish institutions ought to have the same rights as the Roman Catholic Church or even individual expropriated owners – ethnic Poles, when it comes to pre-war property. Even Jewish places of worship are not treated as deserving of protection and respect, as *Nasz Dziennik* sees nothing wrong in the fact that a swimming pool is now situated in the former temple, a change of use made by the Nazis as a sign of contempt for Judaism. In England it might be commonplace that churches are being turned into flats, in Poland such developments are seen as the barbarism of the secular West. It is unimaginable that *Nasz Dziennik* would speak with such nonchalance about a Christian temple. The very fact that properties of former communal or sacred use are being handed back to the

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<sup>27</sup> I. C. Pogonowski, ‘Irak, Israel i przedwyborcze slogany w USA’, *Nasz Dziennik*, 52: 2 March 2004, p. 12.



Jewish community is seen by *Nasz Dziennik* as a threat. I would argue that the manner of the representation of the theme of the restitution of Jewish property reveals not only a response of journalists to the anxieties of their readers, but it is an attempt to provoke these anxieties. The facts are as follows: religious institutions have the legal right to recover places of worship and communal use; Jewish property owners, who are Polish citizens, or their heirs, have the same right to recover their property as do other Poles. But *Nasz Dziennik* sees this as creating ‘mini Jewish quarters’, making fortunes and tormenting Poland by lobbying from across the ocean. In such articles we see the continuity of ideas of the pre-war National Democrats, according to which representatives of ethnic or religious minorities were refused full civil rights. Before the war Endecja called on the Jews to leave Poland; today the movement’s heirs in *Nasz Dziennik* issue a clear warning to the Jews to stay out of Poland.



## Chapter IV

### Jedwabne

The most prominent Jewish issue since the breakdown of the Communist regime in the Polish media has been the Jedwabne massacre. Before the Jedwabne controversy there were two major debates on Polish-Jewish relations; Jan Błoński in 1987 in the progressive Catholic weekly *Tygodnik Powszechny* addressed the taboo of Polish inaction in the face of the greatest atrocity that befell their Jewish co-nationals.<sup>1</sup> The second debate erupted after *Gazeta Wyborcza* published articles exposing anti-Jewish actions during the Warsaw Uprising.<sup>2</sup> Both debates were confined to the circle of Polish intellectuals. The image of the heroic past had not even been scratched as far as public opinion was concerned. However, these discussions prepared the elites for the bombshell of the Jedwabne controversy.

In 2001 the Polish public was shocked by the news that on 10 July 1941, in a village on the eastern outskirts of Poland called Jedwabne, Poles with a little encouragement from the Nazis staged a horrific pogrom on their Jewish neighbours. *Nasz Dziennik* in unison with the right-wing nationalistic press denied that Poles took an active part in this crime. The discussion about Jedwabne encouraged the newspaper to launch a full-blown antisemitic campaign. *Nasz Dziennik* insisted that it was not the good Catholic neighbours of the Jews who staged the lynching, but the dregs of the local community. Nevertheless, even that scum was held at a gunpoint by the Nazis and only then, having little choice, they burned the Jews in a barn.<sup>3</sup> The articles about Polish-Jewish affairs from that point onwards became increasingly fierce in tone and libellous about Jews. *Nasz Dziennik* began elaborating about a Jewish conspiracy; Jews were reported to use lies about Jedwabne to blackmail Poland into paying them ‘billions of dollars’.

The articles related to the Jedwabne murder concentrate around the following themes:

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<sup>1</sup> His essay was a response to the poem *Campo di Fiori* by C. Miłosz, for the English translation of the essay see: J. Błoński, ‘The poor Poles look at the Ghetto’, in: A. Polonsky (ed.), *My Brother’s Keeper? Recent Polish debates on the Holocaust*, (London, 1990), pp. 34-53.

<sup>2</sup> The debate started with the article: Michał Cichy, ‘Polacy i Żydzi: czarne strony kroniki Powstania Warszawskiego’, *Gazeta Wyborcza*, 29-30 Jan. 1994, pp. 13-16.

<sup>3</sup> For a discussion whether those Poles who killed Jedwabne Jews were ordinary citizens see: D. Blatman, ‘Were There Ordinary Poles?’, *Yad Vashem Studies*, XXX (2002), pp. 51-68.



- A fierce critique of the book *Neighbors* by Jan Tomasz Gross;<sup>4</sup>
- Defamatory and very personal attacks on J.T. Gross;
- Highlighting the key role played by the Nazis in the Jedwabne murder;
- Creating of the image of the (ethnic) Poles from Jedwabne and the region as victims not perpetrators;
- Undermining the reliability of the investigation by the Institute of National Remembrance<sup>5</sup> (thereafter: IPN);
- Looking for examples of ‘anti-Polonism’ in the press coverage, both in Polish and international media;
- Accounting for alleged financial profits that ‘the Jews’ will derive from publicising the murder case and putting the blame on the Poles.

In this chapter I will present and analyse the material chronologically. In this way I am able to demonstrate changes of tone, arguments and themes as the discussion on the Jedwabne murders carried on in the media. Commentators in Poland when writing about this media frenzy often refer to the ‘Jedwabne case [sprawa Jedwabnego]’ or ‘Jedwabne controversy’. This term refers not only to the discussion about the murder itself, but to the whole array of topics that became inseparable from it. To mention a few: the scholarly credentials of Gross, the role of Jews in the Soviet apparatus on the eastern borderlands of occupied Poland, the role of the Polish Catholic Church in protecting the Jews during the war, the appropriateness of the Polish president making an apology for the crime and Jewish property restitution. As with many other high profile and controversial cases the Jedwabne massacre became a pretext for political and ideological battles.

Before I outline the stages in the Jedwabne discussion, I must try to answer why the news about the Jedwabne murders had such a shock effect on public opinion. Although historians of the Łomża region were aware of the murders of Jews committed there during the war at the hands of (ethnic) Poles, this did not become a topic of scholarly debate until 2001. In 1966 Szymon Datner wrote about the pogrom in Jedwabne, but Poles were not mentioned as perpetrators, because of the political

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<sup>4</sup> J. T. Gross, *Sąsiedzi: Historia zagłady żydowskiego miasteczka*, (Sejny, 2000); English translation: J. T. Gross, *Neighbors: The Destruction of the Jewish Community in Jedwabne*, (Princeton, 2001).

<sup>5</sup> Instytut Pamięci Narodowej.



situation that compromised scholars' work on contentious topics.<sup>6</sup> In 1980 Jedwabne Jewish expatriates published in Hebrew and English a Memorial Book that talked about the massacre.<sup>7</sup> Bearing in mind the political situation and the isolation of Polish scholars then, it is understandable that the book had no impact on Polish scholarship. This excuse could no longer be made after 1989. Interestingly, not historians but local journalists<sup>8</sup> first raised the issue of the massacre in 1988. At best historians would have been aware of the Polish underground members murdering the Jewish underground fighters with the excuse that the latter were Soviet spies. Thus when Gross published his book most scholars were simply not prepared to address the revelation. Hence, the initial phase of the Jedwabne controversy was marked by relative silence. As for public opinion, through films and literature some might have been aware of the existence of *szmalcownicy* – Poles who collaborated with the Nazis and profited from the Jewish misfortune. Thus, the revelation that Polish civilians in 1941 smashed heads of and burnt alive Jewish men, women and children, their own neighbours, was received with shock and often disbelief. For too long the cultivated image of Polish heroism and martyrdom remained publicly unchallenged.

In May 2000 Gross's *Neighbors* was published. The book was aimed at a popular readership. I think that the fact that it is accessible to a non-scholarly audience contributed greatly to the scale of the discussion about Jedwabne. The book's first edition sold about 200,000 copies, undoubtedly an achievement for a book on such a topic. Nevertheless, only a fraction of the public became familiar 'firsthand' with Gross's account. However, its accessible narrative meant that journalists felt confident to pick up the topic in their publications. Essentially the book presented what it was like for a Jewish victim to be hunted down by his Polish neighbours. The prominence of the voice of the pogrom survivor, Szmuel Wazersztajn, in the book became the most important criticism against reliability of Gross's work. However, even critics of Gross's *Neighbors* later admitted that: 'Discussion of the Polish-Jewish past is now nearly unimaginable without reference to

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<sup>6</sup> S. Datner, 'Eksterminacja Ludności Żydowskiej w Okregu Białostockim', *Biuletyn Żydowskiego Instytutu Historycznego*, 60 (Oct.-Dec. 1966), p. 22.

<sup>7</sup> *Jedwabne Book. History and Remembrance* (Hebrew), (Committee of Jedwabne Expatriates: Jerusalem and New York, 1980).

<sup>8</sup> The journalists of local newspaper *Kontakty*, for the extracts of those texts and later articles by same authors in English see: A. Polonsky, J. Michlic (eds.), *The neighbors respond. The controversy over the Jedwabne massacre in Poland*, (Princeton, 2004), pp. 47-69.



Jedwabne. The book encouraged a new wave of research and reflection that has expanded our knowledge well beyond the history of one town'.<sup>9</sup>

Interestingly, immediately after the publication of *Neighbors* there was a relative silence in the media about the issue. One might call it the silence before the storm. With the exception of the *Rzeczpospolita* daily, which in May and June 2000 published articles on Jedwabne by Andrzej Kaczyński,<sup>10</sup> there seemingly was not much interest in the topic. *Nasz Dziennik* published articles mainly dismissing Gross's book rather than discussing the murders. This silence confirmed that at the time intellectual elites simply knew too little about the subject to publicly comment on it. Others, to put it succinctly, were reluctant to put their academic position at stake. After all, Gross was a pioneer not only with regard to the topic but also methodology. Available historiography published during the Communist era often distorted the facts. In terms of methodology, Gross's affirmative rather than sceptical approach to the survivor's testimony, irritated those who favoured the latter. There was also another aspect, which became apparent much later during numerous discussions, lectures and conferences. Polish intellectuals, journalists and historians needed time to come to terms with the facts. They had to overcome shock and disbelief.

The Jedwabne massacre case represents this side of Polish history which is shameful for the Poles to discuss.<sup>11</sup> The 'dark past' as some might call it was difficult to explore.<sup>12</sup> Hence this initial period in the Jedwabne case saga was marked by silent waiting. Poles waited for the results of the IPN investigation that was opened on 31 August 2000. However, with the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Jedwabne murders approaching neither the Polish media nor the international Jewish community were prepared to wait patiently for the results. In addition, the media waited for more bombshells like Jedwabne, as it soon became clear that Gross had uncovered only a 'tip of an iceberg' and Jedwabne was not just one isolated case. Some scholars waited for the Nazi film footage that they expected turning up from German archives showing beastly Poles killing Jews. Uncovering difficult historical facts aside, Polish

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<sup>9</sup> D. Stola, 'Jedwabne: Revisiting the Evidence and Nature of the Crime', *Holocaust and Genocide Studies*, 17/1 (2003), pp. 139-152.

<sup>10</sup> See: A. Polonsky, J. Michlic (eds.), *The neighbors respond...*, p. 47.

<sup>11</sup> For the comments on the first stage of the debate see: F. Fox, 'A Skeleton in Poland's Closet: Jedwabne Massacre', *EEJA*, 31/1 (Summer 2001), pp. 77-94.

<sup>12</sup> For the definition of the term in the context of the Jedwabne discussion see: J. Michlic, *Coming to terms with the 'Dark Past': the Polish Debate about the Jedwabne Massacre*, ACTA: 21, (Jerusalem, 2002).



elites were faced with a major PR disaster. With ambitions for Poland to join the EU, Poles making international headlines as Nazi collaborators was the last thing the elites wished to see. All these factors raised the temperature of the debate.

At the beginning *Nasz Dziennik* saw the Jedwabne case as only a discussion about Gross's book. It was not perceived as a serious challenge to the self-image of the Poles as propagated by the newspaper. The fact that *Neighbors* was published, that elites were reading the book, did not automatically mean that society at large accepted its message or even became familiar with it. The newspaper might have seen here a similarity with the debate raised by Błoński. Also, at the time the publicists of *Nasz Dziennik* were convinced that the IPN investigation would only demonstrate that the key role in the murders was played by the Nazis. So in the initial period, the articles of *Nasz Dziennik* on the subject presented none of the later furious, 'apologist' polemic. We have to bear in mind that even in November 2000, especially after the interview with Prof. Tomasz Szarota published in *Gazeta Wyborcza*,<sup>13</sup> in which he criticised Gross's scholarly ability, many still believed that the Jedwabne investigation would clear the Poles of accusations.

Even as late as January 2001, *Nasz Dziennik* restricted itself to general comments about the unreliability of the massacre account by Gross. Monika Rotulska questioned the validity of basing an account on the testimony of would-be victims.<sup>14</sup> She pointed to the fallibility of human memory that can distort the historical truth. According to Rotulska such distortion occurred in Gross's book, who 'evidently affirms the lie'. Further, she suggested that the truth about Jedwabne could 'be hidden away', just as it happened with the Kielce 1946 pogrom. As evidence that this will be the case she asserted the fact that the Polish government 'does not undermine in a decisive way the reliability of accounts found in Gross's book.'<sup>15</sup> This attitude towards witness testimonies was something totally new in *Nasz Dziennik*. After all, the newspaper uses witnesses, sometimes unverified statements by the readers, to recreate the historical truth (see chapter II: Holocaust, KL Warschau case). However, when it came to Jedwabne and Gross *Nasz Dziennik* decided to change its criteria.

Another article pointed to a possibly favourable outcome of the investigation for Poles, as new witnesses were reported to contact IPN and their testimonies 'can

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<sup>13</sup> *Gazeta Wyborcza*, 268: 18-19 Nov. 2000, pp. 10-12.

<sup>14</sup> M. Rotulska, 'Widmo Jedwabnego', *Nasz Dziennik*, 23: 27-28 Jan. 2001, p. 16.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*



show the murder in a totally different light.’<sup>16</sup> At the same time more articles challenging Gross’s reliability appeared. Sebastian Rzeczkowski saw Gross’s work as ‘accusations without proof’.<sup>17</sup> Specifically he criticised Gross for not carrying out a survey of appropriate archives and for a lack of objectivity towards the materials found in the Jewish Historical Institute, which during Communism were ‘corrected’.

February 2001 was a watershed in the *Nasz Dziennik*’s reporting on the Jedwabne case. On 12 February 2001 the head of IPN, Prof. Leon Kieres, met in New York with the leaders of Jewish organisations. It was then and there that for the first time he declared that ‘in Jedwabne Jews were murdered by Poles’. This event outraged the writers in *Nasz Dziennik*. Realising that the outcome of the investigation would not be what they hoped for they launched a fierce attack. Also in February 2001 the Jewish monthly *Midrasz* devoted the whole issue to the Jedwabne case.<sup>18</sup> The first article in *Nasz Dziennik* that marked the change was by Monika Rotulska, who claimed that Kieres followed ‘directives from New York’ and thus accused Poles for the murder.<sup>19</sup> Rotulska was also suspicious about the speed with which the investigation was carried out. She pointed out that Kieres ‘spoke about the Polish responsibility for the tragedy despite the testimonies from the witnesses of the events who claim that the murder was carried out by the Germans.’ To make her point even stronger she quoted a Jedwabne resident, who said that Szmuel Wasersztajn, on whose testimony Gross’s book was based, could not have been an eyewitness to the murder.

In the same month Dr Adam Cyra, who works in the National Museum Auschwitz-Birkenau in Oświęcim, joined the discussion in *Nasz Dziennik*. In his campaign for ‘justice in history’<sup>20</sup> he presented the case of Jerzy Łudański, one of those accused in a 1949 trial of committing the crime in Jedwabne. The article highlighted the brutality of the UB<sup>21</sup> investigation in 1949. It also talked about Łudański’s tragic experiences during the war in Pawiak prison, in Auschwitz, Gross-Rosen and Sachsenhausen camps. The author published a letter from Kazimierz Łudański, the older brother of Jerzy, who stated:

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<sup>16</sup> ‘Nowi świadkowie’, *Nasz Dziennik*, 24: 29 Jan. 2001, p. 3.

<sup>17</sup> S. Rzeczkowski, ‘Oskarżenia bez dowodów’, *Nasz Dziennik*, 25: 30 Jan. 2001, pp. 11-12.

<sup>18</sup> *Midrasz*, 2(46), Feb. 2001.

<sup>19</sup> M. Rotulska, ‘Dyrektywy z Nowego Jorku’, *Nasz Dziennik*, 42: 19 Feb. 2001, pp. 1, 3.

<sup>20</sup> A. Cyra, ‘O sprawiedliwy osąd historii’, *Nasz Dziennik*, 43: 20 Feb. 2001, p. 11.

<sup>21</sup> Security Office.



Prof. Gross with all premeditation puts the guilt [for the murders] on the whole of the Jedwabne community, not even sparing our clergy. For sensation he invents horrific stories about throwing Jewish children on forks into the fire, all this to present to the world that Jedwabne was a second Oświęcim, but with Poles as perpetrators. [...] It is true that the 'red neighbours' were lynched, the majority of them Poles. Poles were settling accounts with traitors-Poles and traitors-Jews. [...] Poles are being accused of antisemitism, but one can hardly expect us to love neighbours traitors.<sup>22</sup>

*Nasz Dziennik* did not comply with the journalistic ethic here, and did not publish a comment that on the day of the massacre no ethnic Pole-Communist sympathiser was harmed in any way.

From this article onwards the justification of the murders focused on the Jews because of their alleged collaboration with the NKVD which became a leitmotif in *Nasz Dziennik*. This view would be expressed not only by the Jedwabne residents, but also historians publishing in the newspaper. Dr A. Cyra, who first included this view in his article, did not comment on them, hence we can interpret it as a silent approval. Concentration camp photographs of Jerzy Łudański illustrated his article. Cyra did not defend Łudański in a straightforward way. However, the description of the tortures by the UB and his imprisonment in Auschwitz are the best defence of Łudański. Who would think that this man could have been involved in committing such a horrific murder?

At the same time *Nasz Dziennik* started publishing letters from the outraged readers. One of the first letters came from Dr B. Idasiak from New York, who expressed his frustration at the 'lies' in the reporting on the Jedwabne case found in the Polish Diaspora press.<sup>23</sup> He wrote about slurs [paszkwile] in which the 'whole of the Polish nation' was accused of the Jedwabne massacre.<sup>24</sup> Later *Nasz Dziennik* talked about the conspiracy surrounding the Jedwabne case and about the phenomenon of 'anti-Polonism'.<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>22</sup> A. Cyra, 'O sprawiedliwy osąd historii', *Nasz Dziennik*, 43: 20 Feb. 2001, p. 11.

<sup>23</sup> Compare: F. Fox, 'A Skeleton in Poland's Closet: Jedwabne Massacre', *EEJA*, 31/ 1 (Summer 2001), pp. 77-94.

<sup>24</sup> *Nasz Dziennik*, 48: 26 Feb. 2001, p. 9.

<sup>25</sup> See chapter VIII: 'Anti-Polonism'.



March and April 2001 were marked by an intensified discussion about the murder. The monthly journal of the progressive Catholic intelligentsia, *Więź*, devoted the whole of its April issue to the Jedwabne massacre.<sup>26</sup> Significantly it published an appeal from archbishop Józef Życiński: 'It would be insane to suggest that there could exist any reasons to justify burning of human beings in barns [...]. Let us not look for imaginary historical documents that might change the tragedy in Jedwabne into some insignificant episode.' On 2 March 2001 in an interview with the Israeli newspaper *Yediot Achronot* president Aleksander Kwaśniewski announced that on the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Jedwabne massacre he would make an apology to the Jewish nation. As a response to the above on 4 March the residents of Jedwabne, at the initiative of the local parish priest, Edward Orłowski, established a committee to defend the town's good name.<sup>27</sup> On 5 March the head of the Polish Roman Catholic Church, cardinal Józef Glemp, declared that: 'Murder by burning alive of the Jewish people, gathered into a barn with the use of force by Poles, is undeniable.' He also announced making an 'apology to God for the sins of ancestors.' On 6 March PM Jerzy Buzek declared: 'Polish participation in the Jedwabne crime is indisputable'; at the same time he highlighted that the crime 'was not committed in the name of the Polish nation or state.' On 11 March the bishop of Łomża Stanisław Stefanek in his homily stated that the residents of Jedwabne were under attack because of Jewish demands regarding properties in Poland.<sup>28</sup>

The voice in the discussion that became crucial in *Nasz Dziennik*'s campaign was that of Prof. Tomasz Strzembosz. This respectable historian, who specialised in the Polish underground and resistance movement during World War II and in the history of the Łomża region, rejected the accusation launched against the Poles from Jedwabne. On 31 March 2001 in the *Rzeczpospolita* daily he challenged Gross's thesis.<sup>29</sup> Strzembosz demanded the dominating, active and direct involvement of the Gestapo to be acknowledged. As for some involvement of a group of Poles in the crime, he interpreted it as an act of revenge for the collaboration of a significant part

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<sup>26</sup> *Więź*, 4 (501), April 2001.

<sup>27</sup> Komitet Obrony Dobrego Imienia Miasta Jedwabne. On the issue how the Jedwabne citizens' collective memory has been affected by the media revelations and how the massacre was commemorated in the folk stories in the town see: M. Kurkowska-Budzan, 'Imagining Jedwabne. The Symbolic and the Real', *Polish Sociological Review*, I (137): 2002, pp. 113-116.

<sup>28</sup> All the events cited in this callendarium have been reported by the national press: *Gazeta Wyborcza*, *Rzeczpospolita* and *Nasz Dziennik* on the dates as mentioned in the text.

<sup>29</sup> *Rzeczpospolita*, 77: 31 Mar. 2001, pp. A6-7.



of the Jewish population with the Soviet occupier. Gross, who had tried to stay away from the debate about the massacre in order not to change it into a debate about his book and abilities as a historian, decided to answer those attacks.<sup>30</sup> In light of Strzembosz's claims the tone of the polemic in *Nasz Dziennik* became more aggressive. The media frenzy about Jedwabne meant that the idealised image of the Poles presented by *Nasz Dziennik* started being challenged. At that time president Aleksander Kwaśniewski enjoyed great popularity, he was the second most popular Pole after John Paul II. When Kwaśniewski declared that Poles-neighbours killed Jews, *Nasz Dziennik* had no choice, but to use 'heavy weapons'. The newspaper decided to use an effective and well-tried arsenal of accusations – blaming the Jews for the crimes of the Soviet security apparatus.

New articles about Jerzy Łudański hailed him as a martyr.<sup>31</sup> In the same paragraphs Jews were identified as Soviet collaborators, in charge of putting up the lists of Poles condemned for deportation and imprisonment in gulags.

A Polish historian based in America, Dr Marek Jan Chodakiewicz,<sup>32</sup> gave an interview in which he claimed that the Jedwabne case was only a prelude to the international campaign set to distort Polish history.<sup>33</sup> According to Chodakiewicz the Jedwabne controversy 'is meant to form a new theory that Poles collaborated with the Nazis just as Lithuanians and Ukrainians did.' In support, he quoted western historians who write about the 'Polish Nazis'. He also challenged the testimony of Szmuel Wasersztajn pointing to a letter from 1995 deposited on ŻIH,<sup>34</sup> in which a witness claimed that 'Wasersztajn's version of the events was dictated to him by a woman linked to the NKVD'. Finally, Chodakiewicz allowed himself to make the following comment: 'Thus from a cluster of personal experiences, someone else's tales, sentiments and gossip came together the Jewish testimonies.' Then he urged the 'independent' Polish historians to take on the research before the 'strangers' will do it for them.

*Nasz Dziennik* on many occasions stressed that the way the Jedwabne case was presented was part of a political game. Also, the newspaper complained about the lack of assertiveness of the Polish authorities in the face of international pressure.

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<sup>30</sup> J. T. Gross, *Wokół "Sąsiadów". Polemiki i wyjaśnienia*, (Sejny, 2003).

<sup>31</sup> 'Morderca czy męczennik', *Nasz Dziennik*, 52: 2 Mar. 2001, pp. 11-13.

<sup>32</sup> See: M. J. Chodakiewicz, *Żydzi i Polacy 1918-1955. Współistnienie – Zagłada – Komunizm*, (Warsaw, 2000); K. Masłoń, 'Prawda na rewesie', *Rzeczpospolita*, 272: 22-23 Nov. 2003, p. A9.

<sup>33</sup> M. J. Chodakiewicz, 'Jedwabne to dopiero początek', *Nasz Dziennik*, 53: 3-4 Mar. 2001, pp. 14-16.

<sup>34</sup> Jewish Historical Institute in Warsaw.



Following Cardinal Glemp's statement made on Radio Józef on 4 March 2001 it claimed that the politicians were trying to impose the form in which the Church should apologise for the Jedwabne massacre. Though the cardinal did not disagree that the crime was committed by Poles he warned 'we cannot let the blindness, that was provoked on the people in Jedwabne extend on the whole to the Polish Nation.'<sup>35</sup>

Dr Adam Cyra came back to the discussion with the article 'Forgotten murder'.<sup>36</sup> He referred to the Białystok massacre, where Jews were burnt in a synagogue by the Nazis shortly before the happenings in Jedwabne. Cyra accused Gross of deliberately omitting this fact in order to claim that 'the idea to burn Jews in a barn was something innovative, invented and carried out without the Nazi participation.' Together with his article the author published a letter from the already mentioned (see p. 107) Kazimierz Laudański entitled 'Prof. Gross did not hear the other side's story.' The letter was intended to undermine the credibility of Szmuel Wasersztajn and Gross because of the sensational news that 'Szmuel Wasersztajn until 1968 was an active agent of the Security Office [UB] and that is why Prof. Gross as an expert and experienced historian trusted him, so much that he even omitted "hearing the other side's story"'.<sup>37</sup>

Another leitmotif in *Nasz Dziennik's* publications on Jedwabne, was the demand that Jews apologise and ask for forgiveness for the crimes they committed against Poles. Father Jerzy Bajda was outraged that 'the president of Poland is more inclined to support the opinions of libellers by standing by the Jews rather than defending Poland's honour'.<sup>38</sup> The author also accused the Jews of leading a campaign 'not for the sake of the truth but for a hypothesis invented by the enemies of Poland in order to carry on the moral destruction of the Nation and of its reputation in the eyes of the world.' Finally, Bajda demanded that the Jews apologise for the 'crimes of Communism'.

Other publications from the same month concentrated on the current situation in Jedwabne and on the opinions of the town's residents. In order to convey the atmosphere of an unjust witch-hunt a history professor Wiesław Jana Wysocki talked

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<sup>35</sup> 'Politycy nie będą narzucać Kościołowi sposobu przeproszenia za mord w Jedwabnem', *Nasz Dziennik*, 55: 6 Mar. 2001, p. 12.

<sup>36</sup> A. Cyra, 'Zapomniany mord', *Nasz Dziennik*, 56: 7 Mar. 2001, p. 11.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid.

<sup>38</sup> J. Bajda, 'Przepraszać? Kto kogo?', *Nasz Dziennik*, 62: 14 Mar. 2001, pp. 11-12.



about Jedwabne being turned into the ‘town of lepers’.<sup>39</sup> He criticised politicising of the murder case and of the plans for reconciliation. Wysocki was convinced that ‘the idea of reconciliation will be fulfilled when in Jedwabne next to a *maceva* [Jewish tombstone] commemorating murdered Jews, a memorial will be erected to honour local Poles transported into the depths of the Soviet empire by the NKVD – as a lot suggests – by those [murdered] Jews who were collaborating with the Soviets.’ Here we have a very striking example of what has been identified as ‘a “non suffering variant”, which claims that whatever wrongs the Poles may have committed against the Jews, these are equalled, if not outweighed, by the wrongs that the Jews committed against the Poles.’<sup>40</sup>

The theme about Jews-neighbours who took part in the NKVD’s persecutions of ethnic Poles was also present in the statements of the Jedwabne residents, eye-witnesses of the crime including those who were only children when it happened. In the interview by Małgorzata Rutkowska,<sup>41</sup> the residents of Jedwabne claimed that just after the crime was committed against the Jews, Poles feared that the Nazis would do to them exactly what they did to the Jews. The residents highlighted that they were intimidated by the Nazis during the time when the Jews were murdered. However, currently they felt being bullied by the media and the authorities. They talked about how the Jews welcomed the Soviets and how they assisted in the deportations. Even an NKVD official was quoted saying ‘we haven’t brought lists with us, its all your Jews [providing them]’ which was supposed to mean that the local Jews played a key role in the repressions of the local ethnic Polish residents. Jedwabne interviewees were very upset that about their ‘martyrdom no one cares to remember. The world is meant to hear the news that Poles were the perpetrators of the terrible murder and the helpers of Hitler in the holocaust. The Polish holocaust does not exist in the consciousness of an average westerner.’<sup>42</sup> The lower case in the spelling of ‘Holocaust’ reflects author’s disagreement with the claims about the uniqueness of persecution of the Jews during World War II.

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<sup>39</sup> W. J. Wysocki, ‘Jedwabne – miasto zadżumionych’, *Nasz Dziennik*, 67: 20 Mar. 2001, pp. 11-12.

<sup>40</sup> How this idea grew out of the antisemitic polemic in Poland in the late 1960s see: A. Polonsky, J. Michlic (eds.), *The neighbors respond...*, p. 9.

<sup>41</sup> M. Rutkowska, ‘I z nami tak będzie’, *Nasz Dziennik*, 71: 24-25 Mar. 2001, pp. 14-15.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid.



In yet another article Dr Adam Cyra<sup>43</sup> recalled various crimes committed against Jews in 1941 by the Nazis. He focused on the key role the Germans played in the pogroms admitting that sometimes 'local hooligans' might have helped them. These were understood as isolated cases, while the message of the article was that other pogroms in the region should be viewed as an analogy for Jedwabne; the Germans not Poles committed those crimes. On the same page *Nasz Dziennik* published views of politician Marek Jurek who refused president Aleksander Kwaśniewski a moral right to show remorse for the Jedwabne crime. According to the author the only apology the president should offer is that for his close co-workers who 'turned up to be participants of the anti-Jewish hunt in 1968.'<sup>44</sup>

According to the historian Leszek Żebrowski those scholars who support Gross follow a 'trail of lies'.<sup>45</sup> He also criticised the Jewish testimonies and highlighted the role of Jews in the Soviet party apparatus. Further, he was outraged that the publicists assign 'the responsibility for the [Jedwabne] murder to the whole of the Polish Nation.'

April 2001 was marked by another watershed in the development of the discussion about the Jedwabne murder. TVP, the state television, screened the documentary by Agnieszka Arnold entitled *Sąsiedzi* [Neighbours]. The film showed interviews with the eyewitnesses of the massacre, people who participated in the crime and their descendants. The documentary deeply moved public opinion and its screening can be taken as the moment when the Poles learned about the crime that took place in Jedwabne. However, this does not mean that from that moment public opinion came to terms with the Polish responsibility for the crime. On the contrary, it was just a first stage of a painful process of confronting the darker sides of Polish history.

At this stage of the discussion *Nasz Dziennik* responded with the five-part series of essays co-written by two authors – a priest, Zdzisław J. Peszkowski, and Stanisław S. Zdrojewski. The authors motivated their participation in the discussion as follows: 'The far-fetched campaign of the western press about the Jedwabne murder and numerous repercussions in the Polish media force us to speak up. Unlike

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<sup>43</sup> A. Cyra, 'Zapomniana relacja', *Nasz Dziennik*, 75: 29 March 2001, pp. 11-12.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid.

<sup>45</sup> W. Moszkowski, 'Jedwabnym szlakiem kłamstw', *Nasz Dziennik*, 77: 31 Mar. – 1 Apr. 2001, pp. 14-15.



others we do not want to pass judgements, nor do we want to wait passively for the Polish history to be re-written by the foreign nations.’<sup>46</sup> In the first instalment of their series the authors recounted the Polish martyrdom under the Nazi and Soviet occupations, as well as reminded the reader of the Ukrainian crimes committed against Poles. In the context of Jedwabne they asked ‘why some swindlers from the holocaust-business try to take over our history?’<sup>47</sup> The second essay described ‘what life looked like in the years 1939-1941 in the “Soviet paradise” in the occupied Polish territories and how rule was established by the Jewish criminals in the Wysokie Mazowieckie area (53 kilometres from Jedwabne).’<sup>48</sup> In the article the Jews were portrayed as ‘degenerates [zwyrodnialcy]’ who were at the NKVD’s service especially when it came to persecution of ethnic Poles. The very same motif was taken up in the third essay where authors wrote about ‘Stalin’s crimes in the Białystok and Łomża regions and the active role of “Committees” set up by the Jewish dregs [margines] and criminals’.<sup>49</sup> One of the dramatic stories presented in the article showed a heroic defence of nine Polish officers against a ‘Jewish mob’; the finale of this story was the tragic death of all officers and a Polish woman with a child. Further, the authors quoted witnesses about the elections and agitation by the NKVD in 1939. Especially one description is striking: ‘The action was guarded by a Jew from Minsk who looked like a thug, later he put together lists of the deported ones.’ The persecutions by ‘Jewish riff-raff [hołota]’ in the Białystok region were said to be so severe that even the Jews, escapees from the Nazi occupation, went back to the regions from which they had escaped. In the following article the authors cited ‘some documents from the archives of the Białystok NKVD, with which Jews closely worked, voluntarily setting up “Committees” in the years 1939-1941 in the villages nearby Jedwabne.’<sup>50</sup> The authors only mentioned in passing that among the victims of executions passed by the NKVD and carried out under the ‘watchful eye of Icek Byszewski’ were also Jews. While Jewish villains were named the victims remained anonymous. The articles may leave the reader under the impression that no ethnic Poles were involved in the Soviet apparatus.

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<sup>46</sup> ‘Wokół Jedwabnego (1)’, *Nasz Dziennik*, 85: 10 Apr. 2001, p. 9.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid.

<sup>48</sup> ‘Wokół Jedwabnego (2)’, *Nasz Dziennik*, 86: 11 Apr. 2001, p. 10.

<sup>49</sup> ‘Wokół Jedwabnego (3)’, *Nasz Dziennik*, 91: 18 Apr. 2001, pp. 10-11.

<sup>50</sup> ‘Wokół Jedwabnego (4)’, *Nasz Dziennik*, 92: 19 Apr. 2001, p. 10.



Only the last essay in the series actually talked about Jedwabne, as all the others were meant to provide 'a background for the murders in the Białystok region.'<sup>51</sup> The conclusions of Peszkowski and Zdrojewski were as follows: 'The series of horrific crimes of the Soviet occupier who used "Committees" formed by social dregs, mostly Jews, suggests that Poles had reasons to feel resentment towards the Jewish collaborators of those who were NKVD functionaries.'<sup>52</sup> However, at the same time the authors were very quick to dismiss any suggestions about motives of revenge. 'Even when the Soviet crimes flourished the Polish victims were not blaming their oppressors, clearly distinguishing the Jewish social dregs from the Jewish entity. This was not noticed by Prof. Gross in his book full of lies.' Analysing 'technical reasons' the authors assessed the number of Jewish victims in Jedwabne between 200 up to 250. In addition, they highlighted the Polish martyrdom and the 'Ukrainian motif' in the case. The theory explained by them that blames the Ukrainians for the massacre is so muddled that it is unintelligible. Finally, the authors warned the readers against the 'strangers' who try to take over Polish history and called for repair of the 'moral damage done by dishonest people to all residents of the Białystok and Łomża regions.'

As the media frenzy around the Jedwabne controversy grew, negative emotions of those who addressed it in *Nasz Dziennik* became hard to control. A former resident of the town swore that she 'will not permit the libelling of Jedwabne!'.<sup>53</sup> Leokadia Błajszczak claimed that she witnessed the massacre and was adamant that the 'murder on Jews was carried out by the Nazis'. Although at the time she was only eleven, she recalled that on the day of the massacre two vans arrived in Jedwabne full of Gestapo men. She accused Gross of many lies published in his book – especially that the Poles looted Jewish property and that they tortured the Jews. Błajszczak was truly outraged that any trust is put in the testimony of Wasersztajn who 'was a UB prosecutor and tortured Polish patriots.'

Another reader, Waldemar Zielonka from Kościan wrote his appeal in a similar tone. In order to prove that Poles 'do not have to fall on their knees'<sup>54</sup> he went back as far as the partition period to recall the Jewish crimes against the Poles. Further, he spoke about Jewish plans to form 'a state within the state' in Poland in

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<sup>51</sup> 'Wokół Jedwabnego (5)', *Nasz Dziennik*, 93: 20 Apr. 2001, p. 11.

<sup>52</sup> Ibid.

<sup>53</sup> G. Dziedzińska, 'Nie pozwolę oczerniać Jedwabnego!', *Nasz Dziennik*, 78: 2 Apr 2001, pp. 11-12.

<sup>54</sup> 'Nie musimy padać na kolana', *Nasz Dziennik*, 84: 9 Apr. 2001, p. 8.



1919, Jewish bankers financing Hitler and about ‘many Communists of Jewish origin.’ In his conclusion Zielonka accused *Gazeta Wyborcza* of ‘poisoning the historical conscience of the Poles’ and reasoned that ‘Poles do not like Jews but it does not mean that we are guilty of a genocide.’ This reader’s views were a mere echo of earlier essays published in *Nasz Dziennik*.

Agnieszka Arnold has been attacked by *Nasz Dziennik* on numerous occasions for her film *Sąsiedzi* [*Neighbours*]. She started being named next to Gross as an initiator of an anti-Polish campaign. In addition to aggressive questions about the director’s origin,<sup>55</sup> always a veiled way to point out a Jew in the nationalistic press, Arnold was accused of falsifying the statements by the Jedwabne inhabitants.<sup>56</sup> Similar criticism befell Anna Bikont who wrote about Jedwabne for *Gazeta Wyborcza*; the journalist was accused of “‘pacifying” Jedwabne, manipulating the residents’ statements, frightening them with the pre-war plans of the town and putting in their mouths colourful descriptions as if taken from the colourful prose of J. Kosiński.’<sup>57</sup>

On 27 May 2001 in Warsaw the Polish Episcopate consecrated an expiatory mass for the Jedwabne massacre. At the end of May, beginning of June, two mass graves in Jedwabne were exhumed. On 28 May 2001 Rada Ochrony Pamięci Walki Męczeństwa<sup>58</sup> announced the text that would be inscribed on the memorial: ‘In memory of Jews from Jedwabne and the surrounding area, men, women and children, co-hosts of this soil, murdered and burnt alive in this place on 10 July 1941.’ This inscription, which does not name the perpetrators of the crime and the number of victims, at the time contributed to the atmosphere of impatient anticipation in the media. In May, *Nasz Dziennik* published a few articles on the ‘Holocaust industry’, as at the time the Polish version of N. Finkelstein’s *The Holocaust Industry* was published – clearly a response to the Jedwabne controversy. A statement was published by a member of Polski Instytut Naukowy in New York, Dr Jan Czekajewski: ‘There should be no illusion that some old services of Poland in bringing down Communism or the self-whipping for the crimes in Jedwabne, will bring some leniency in the financial demands of the American Jewish

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<sup>55</sup> W. Moszkowski, ‘Arnold o pochodzeniu’, *Nasz Dziennik*, 87: 12 Apr. 2001, p. 16.

<sup>56</sup> W. Moszkowski, ‘Prawda czasu, prawda Arnold’, *Nasz Dziennik*, 92: 19 Apr. 2001, p. 11.

<sup>57</sup> J. Pawlas, ‘Dialog’, *Nasz Dziennik*, 92: 19 Apr. 2001, p. 11.

<sup>58</sup> The Council for Saving Remembrance of Warfare and Martyrdom.



organisations'.<sup>59</sup> The author pointed out that the 'libellous campaign of drawing comparisons between the Poles and the Nazis' was very damaging for the Polish Diaspora, which in the face of the 'meekness strategy chosen by the Polish government' might stop showing any interest in the affairs in Poland.

'After witch-hunt, hysteria'<sup>60</sup> – this was how Maciej Walaszczyk summed up the state of the discussion about Jedwabne. The author reported on the discussion devoted to the massacre that took place in the Warsaw synagogue on 18 June 2001. The word 'hysteria' described the reaction of those 'agreeing with Gross's opinions' to the criticism of his findings. They were said to react emotionally instead of taking up constructive discussion.

10 July 2001 marked the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the massacre of the Jews in Jedwabne. President Aleksander Kwaśniewski during the official commemoration ceremony famously said: 'I apologise in the name of those Poles, whose conscience is moved by that crime. In the name of those, who believe that we cannot be proud of the magnificence of Polish history without at the same time feeling pain and shame because of the wrongs that Poles have done to others.'<sup>61</sup> Immediately after the ceremony *Nasz Dziennik* was not especially shocked or outraged, in fact it summed up the ceremony as 'apologies according to plan.'<sup>62</sup> Despite what *Nasz Dziennik* had been suggesting no one blamed the whole nation for collaboration with the Nazis and for taking part in the Holocaust. Also, significantly the president did not apologise in the name of all the Poles. However, once the exact words of the president's speech had been forgotten, *Nasz Dziennik* claimed that he actually did apologise in the name of the whole nation. Reporting on the commemorating ceremony just like other newspapers *Nasz Dziennik* published photographs of the president and the government officials who as a sign of respect of the Jewish tradition wore *kippot* [skullcaps] at the place that once was a scene of a horrific crime and now is a mass grave. Other newspapers published the photos more as an illustration, for *Nasz Dziennik* they were a cause for sensation. That a picture of the president wearing a *kippah* in such circumstances should arouse a series of speculations is symptomatic of *Nasz Dziennik*'s obsession with the Jews. The newspaper has reprinted the photo of Kwaśniewski wearing a *kippah* on numerous occasions, even years after the event,

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<sup>59</sup> 'Polska kontra Polonia', *Nasz Dziennik*, 117: 21 May 2001, p. 11.

<sup>60</sup> 'Po nagonce – histeria', *Nasz Dziennik*, 142: 20 June 2001, p. 3.

<sup>61</sup> Full text of the speech in: A. Polonsky, J. Michlic (eds.), *The neighbors respond...*, pp. 130-132.

<sup>62</sup> *Nasz Dziennik*, 160: 11 July 2001, p. 3.



especially to illustrate the articles on the 'Holocaust industry'. For *Nasz Dziennik* this was photographic evidence that the president is a Jewish puppet.

Following the anniversary commemorations the newspaper enforced the message that 'the Germans murdered in Jedwabne'. It published a parliamentary address<sup>63</sup> of senator Jadwiga Stokarska who took part in the debate about the IPN<sup>64</sup> on 13 September 2001. The senator presented the circumstances in which the crime was committed: 'When the Russians came [in 1939] all the Poles were fired and Jews filled all the administrative jobs. They got arms from the Russians and formed the local militia. Lots of young Jews joined the NKVD, the Konsomol, the Bolshevik party. In Jedwabne Jews put together a list of Poles for deportation to Siberia.'<sup>65</sup> Stokarska quoted *Dziennik Wojenny* by Franz Halder who claimed that the Jews murdered in the barn by the Gestapo 'did not die as Jews, but as communists and as the families of those Communists – based on the decree issued by the Wehrmacht in Białystok which was read to them by a Jew-Gestapo man. For the Jews the Germans prepared a different death: through the ghetto.' The senator highlighted that the 'massacre in Jedwabne was organised and carried out by the Germans, and not by the Poles. The Poles were forced by the Gestapo to identify the families related to the Jews-Communists. Under the barrels of German machine guns, hit with butts, the Poles were forced to lead the Jews out of their houses and escort them to the town centre.'<sup>66</sup> Further, the author of this address contrasted the actions of the Judenrats with those heroic acts of help that the Poles showed the Jews during the occupation. However, the most shocking were the senator's final words that were supposed to explain all the frenzy around the Jedwabne case. On 10 July 2001 the parish priest of Jedwabne Father Edward Orłowski was visited by 'a Jewish theologian with a government interpreter' (no further details were given). This Jew 'accused the priest that he is collaborating with the murderers (he had in mind the residents of Jedwabne). He stubbornly maintained that the Poles are murderers, they murdered the Jews in Jedwabne and their holy obligation is to help the Jews in rebuilding of the Israeli state and its establishment on the Arab territories among the Arab nations. To the priest's questions as to how he should understand all this, the Jewish theologian

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<sup>63</sup> For responses by other Polish politicians to Jedwabne see: J. Frentzel-Zgorska, 'Leading Politicians on Jedwabne', *Polish Sociological Review*, 1/137 (2002), p. 135.

<sup>64</sup> Institute of National Remembrance.

<sup>65</sup> 'Niemcy mordowali w Jedwabnem', *Nasz Dziennik*, 222: 22-23 Sep. 2001, pp. 20-21.

<sup>66</sup> Ibid.



answered that Poles should give the Jews money: 65 milliard dollars and 35 milliard of interest.'

The discussion was strengthened by the voice of one of *Nasz Dziennik*'s chief historians – Prof. Jerzy Robert Nowak. He dismissed Gross as a 'disqualified' historian, on the basis of an analysis of *Neighbors* carried out by Germany-based historian Bogdan Musiał<sup>67</sup> who 'did not find even one positive thing in this anti-Polish libel.'<sup>68</sup> In the article Gross was criticised for: not surveying the German archives, libelling bishop Łukomski, relying on untrustworthy witnesses, claiming a much higher number of victims and 'being silent about the criminal role of the Germans.' According to B. Musiał: 'even only partially carried out exhumation confirmed the theory that the Germans directly took part in the Jedwabne murder.' On the other hand, Nowak recalled the criticism by historians N. Davies, C. Lukas and N.G. Finkelstein, and thus concluded that: 'The book *Neighbors* by Gross, apart from some enthusiasm expressed in extremely chauvinistic Jewish circles abroad, was met with fierce response from truly great specialists in Polish-Jewish relations.'<sup>69</sup> In another article Prof. Nowak was outraged that Gross was nominated for the Dariusz Fikus award which honours journalists and writers: 'Apparently there exist two Polands: the Poland really faithful to tradition, Polishness and patriotism and another Poland that tolerates the worst anti-Poles, lenient towards the most damaging anti-Polish libels.'<sup>70</sup>

When compared with the previous year in 2002 *Nasz Dziennik* published many fewer articles exclusively devoted to the Jedwabne murder case. However, it does not mean that the newspaper lost interest in the topic. The main themes that appeared in the articles about the Jedwabne massacre, still kept re-appearing in the other articles on Jewish themes especially in those on the 'Jewish crimes' and the 'Holocaust industry'. Very often Jedwabne unexpectedly has been mentioned next to topics that one would not obviously link, such as Israel or the war in Iraq.

The following anniversary of the massacre was marked in *Nasz Dziennik* by new accusations as well as old ones presented in a slightly different form. This time the debate was led by Prof. I. C. Pogonowski who sees history in black and white

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<sup>67</sup> See also: P. A. Rudling, 'Bogdan Musiał and the Question of Jewish Responsibility for the Pogrom in Lviv in the Summer 1941', *EEJA*, 35/1 (June 2005), pp. 69-111.

<sup>68</sup> J. R. Nowak, 'Gross zdyskwalifikowany', *Nasz Dziennik*, 281: 1-2 Dec. 2001, pp. 16-17.

<sup>69</sup> Ibid.

<sup>70</sup> J. R. Nowak, 'Dwie Polski', *Nasz Dziennik*, 34: 9-10 Feb. 2002, p. 16.



only, thus to him Jews paid the Poles ‘with libels for [the latter’s] heroism.’<sup>71</sup> The author highlighted the role of Jews in the NKVD and marginalized the role of the Poles in the Jedwabne murders. He criticised the decision taken by the IPN investigators to interrupt the exhumation in Jedwabne, and claimed that this happened as ‘the emerging picture was not compatible with the “history by Gross”’. As could be expected the author did not mention that Gross protested and repeatedly expressed his disappointment that the exhumation was interrupted.<sup>72</sup> Also, Pogonowski declared categorically that: ‘In the absence of a complete exhumation and a precise analysis based on forensic science any final report by the IPN will be worthless.’ He summed up the whole Jedwabne case as a campaign blaming the Poles for the crimes committed by the Nazis and the Communists. The article was illustrated by a picture of president Kwaśniewski wearing a *kippah* at the anniversary celebrations in 2001, the caption read: ‘By accusing the Polish Nation of murdering the Jews in Jedwabne Aleksander Kwaśniewski wants to hide numerous Communist crimes.’<sup>73</sup>

Another frequent contributor to *Nasz Dziennik*, historian Leszek Żebrowski argued that Gross’s book and ‘extensive publications in the national and world press based on it are the basis for extreme anti-Polish addresses, blaming the Poles for participating in the holocaust’.<sup>74</sup> Similarly to other authors Żebrowski wrote about the Jews from Jedwabne collaborating with the NKVD, as well as the discrepancy between Wasersztajn’s testimony and the IPN investigation (for example that the exhumation showed that the Jewish victims had not been robbed). The historian criticised Gross for unreliability and the Jews in general for stopping the exhumation, which ‘was against the Polish law’.<sup>75</sup>

After the statement made by the head of the IPN, Leon Kieres, in which he named the Poles as the key perpetrators of the murders committed in Jedwabne, *Nasz Dziennik* furiously criticised the IPN. The competence and motives of the Institute’s employees have been repeatedly questioned. An article by Maciej Walaszczyk summed up the IPN investigation as not serious because ‘without presenting the evidence the prosecutors of the IPN accused forty Poles of participating in the crime. The findings were based only on testimonies of witnesses, often contradictory. The

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<sup>71</sup> I. C. Pogonowski, ‘Niewygodna prawda. Jedwabne – oszczerstwa zapłatą za bohaterstwo’, *Nasz Dziennik*, 140: 18 June 2002, pp. 8-9.

<sup>72</sup> J. T. Gross, *Wokół “Sąsiadów”*. *Polemiki i wyjaśnienia*, (Sejny, 2003), p. 89.

<sup>73</sup> Ibid.

<sup>74</sup> ‘Pytania o Jedwabne (1)’, *Nasz Dziennik*, 157: 8 July 2002, p. 12.

<sup>75</sup> ‘Pytania o Jedwabne (2)’, *Nasz Dziennik*, 158: 9 July 2002, p. 12.



IPN did not even get to the documents confirming the presence of the German troops in the Jedwabne region.’<sup>76</sup>

Prof. I.C. Pogonowski wrote similarly about the IPN investigation, though he used stronger words to sum it up; to him it was an ‘absurdity’. He stated that: ‘The IPN hypothesis – trying to prove that about 40 Polish inhabitants of Jedwabne, not armed with guns, without access to easily combustible materials and without preparations, were able to murder 300-400 Jewish residents of Jedwabne by burning them alive in a barn. All this without the resistance from the victims or mass escapes – it is proving an ABSURDITY!!’<sup>77</sup>

Bishop Stanisław Stefanek spoke about the negligence in the IPN investigation in an interview given to KAI<sup>78</sup> and reprinted by *Nasz Dziennik*. The bishop talked about the ‘covering up of the truth about Jedwabne’ and that from ‘all this truth searching came out not really a scientific and legal investigation but a platform for journalism and propaganda, with a scenario and a main idea made up in advance.’<sup>79</sup>

In 2003 the articles exclusively devoted to the Jedwabne case mainly concentrated on the IPN findings and the Institute’s publication<sup>80</sup> *Wokół Jedwabnego*,<sup>81</sup> which *Nasz Dziennik* described as ‘sloppy work [fuszerka]’ (see: chapter V: the IPN). Historian L. Żebrowski claimed that IPN’s ruling in the Jedwabne case regarding Polish responsibility was taken without any proof’.<sup>82</sup> At the same time he accepted the number of Jewish victims as claimed by the IPN – 300 dead. However, it seemed that he did so not out of confidence in IPN’s work, but in order to expose Gross as a liar, because of ‘his’<sup>83</sup> estimate that the massacre claimed lives of 1600 Jews. Other *Nasz Dziennik*’s authorities such as J. R. Nowak, hailed as an ‘independent historian’, declared that results of IPN’s investigation were a fiasco [kompromitacja].<sup>84</sup> Finally, *Nasz Dziennik* complained that for the IPN Jedwabne was

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<sup>76</sup> ‘Niepoważne śledztwo’, *Nasz Dziennik*, 159: 10 July 2002, pp. 1-2.

<sup>77</sup> I. C. Pogonowski, ‘Jedwabne w oparach absurdu’, *Nasz Dziennik*, 164: 16 July 2002, p. 3.

<sup>78</sup> Catholic News Agency.

<sup>79</sup> ‘Zamazywanie prawdy o Jedwabnem’, *Nasz Dziennik*, 263: 12 Nov. 2002, p. 4.

<sup>80</sup> See also: A. M. Cienciala., ‘The Jedwabne Massacre: update and review’, *The Polish Review*, XLVIII/ 1 (2003), pp. 49-72.

<sup>81</sup> P. Machcewicz, K. Persak, (eds.), *Wokół Jedwabnego*, (Warsaw, 2002).

<sup>82</sup> L. Żebrowski, ‘Wyrok zapadł bez dowodów’, *Nasz Dziennik*, 164: 16 July 2003, p. 10.

<sup>83</sup> Gross stressed that he did not make the estimates; the number 1600 appeared on the memorial built by ZBoWiD and in the testimony of Wasersztajn, see: J. T. Gross, *Wokół “Sąsiadów”*. *Polemiki i wyjaśnienia*, (Sejny, 2003), p. 101.

<sup>84</sup> Z. Baranowski, ‘Uwierzyli w niepotwierdzone zeznania’, *Nasz Dziennik*, 159: 10 July 2003, p. 3.



more important than investigating the crimes of the NKVD.<sup>85</sup> At times these attacks on the IPN and Jews reached, even to *Nasz Dziennik*'s standards, bad taste. Pogonowski wrote about an American rabbi who sold a Jewish children's cemetery to the shopping centre's developer and compared it with Jedwabne where the exhumation was interrupted.<sup>86</sup> This article was meant to expose Jewish hypocrisy and lack of scruples when faced with financial gain – old antisemitic tropes.

Many of the articles and references to Jedwabne after 2002 were hardly connected to the massacre itself. Rather, for *Nasz Dziennik* Jedwabne became a shorthand for a libellous scam engineered by Jews to blackmail Poland. Hence numerous attempts to reinforce this message appeared especially on the last page of the newspaper. This page (usually no. 16) is divided into small columns entitled: 'Aj! Waj!' (for Jewish themes with a logo of two long nosed profiles in fedora hats), 'Anti-Polonism' or 'Eurokołchoźnik' to name a few. They serve as punch lines to more serious articles. On the other hand to the older less educated and media aware audience of *Nasz Dziennik* they probably serve as summaries of what a good Pole should think on such issues as Jedwabne, *Gazeta Wyborcza* or the EU. Also, we should see this page and its content in the historical context of the nationalistic publications in Poland. Before the war the nationalists excelled at 'target' publications which would match the intellectual level of the audience. Hence pamphlets full of rhymes and 'gutter witticisms'. I see page 16 in *Nasz Dziennik* as a continuation of this tradition. We ought to bear in mind that jokes and anecdotes published here would be repeated by the readers thus spreading further the ideas of *Nasz Dziennik*.

Jan Kowalski (most probably a pseudonym; Mr Smith) is the most prolific and sarcastic of the page 16 authors. He suggested that an established and respected historian Prof. Jerzy Tomaszewski took part in the discussion about Jedwabne because he received a prize of five thousand dollars for such involvement.<sup>87</sup> The same author so liberally quoted the chief rabbi of Poland Michael Schudrich as to show him holding the same view as *Nasz Dziennik* regarding the inscription on the Jedwabne memorial.<sup>88</sup> He also referred to the 'Kabbala of Gross' and as comment on Jedwabne

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<sup>85</sup> A. Kruczek, 'Akowcy za drutami "wyzwolonego" Majdanka', *Nasz Dziennik*, 235: 6 Oct. 2004, pp. 1, 3.

<sup>86</sup> I. C. Pogonowski, 'Pogwałcenie prawa i historii', *Nasz Dziennik*, 162: 13 July 2004, p. 12.

<sup>87</sup> J. Kowalski, 'Geszeft na aspektach', *Nasz Dziennik*, 110: 13 May 2003, p. 16.

<sup>88</sup> J. Kowalski, 'Dialog z prawdą', *Nasz Dziennik*, 164: 16 July 2003, p. 16.



exclaimed ‘even Ukraine is not so weak to apologize for anything.’<sup>89</sup> The latter referred to the Wołyń ethnic cleansings committed on Poles, Kowalski claimed here and elsewhere that since Ukraine did not apologise to Poles for a real crime, by analogy we do not have to apologise to Jews for a crime that Poles did not commit.<sup>90</sup> Another author of page 16, hidden under initials CW, also linked Wołyń to Jedwabne. According to him despite the fact that 120 thousand Poles were killed in Wołyń ‘politicians dismiss this truth by saying that “Poles also killed Ukrainians”.’<sup>91</sup> As for Jedwabne: ‘Surrender occurred in the face of incredible Jewish propaganda, therefore the investigation was stopped [...] and the guilt of Poles was assumed.’ The author continued ‘soon we will have to prove that “Poland did not attack Germany and Russia in 1939”.’

According to A. Hojda, who also often writes for page 16, the process of blaming Poland for everything has already started as Jedwabne is given the same status as Auschwitz. Moreover, he protested against infringement of democracy as allegedly it is forbidden to question or negate the Jedwabne crime. He even referred to the ‘Jedwabne lie’ in an ironic way to mirror the legal term ‘Oświęcim lie.’ Finally, he reasserted that Gross and Wiesenthal were liars.<sup>92</sup> Other villains in the Jedwabne case have been named. Shewach Weiss who as the Israeli ambassador often spoke about Jedwabne was sarcastically asked to ‘write *The Neighbours* from Gaza’.<sup>93</sup> Polish media have been accused of forging history regarding Jedwabne.<sup>94</sup> The Batory Foundation was again libelled for sponsoring the publication of *Neighbors*.<sup>95</sup> In short page 16 articles while occasionally bringing in new information, essentially were meant to remind the reader of *Nasz Dziennik*’s views on Jedwabne and reinforce them.

Sometimes old topics were brought up by *Nasz Dziennik* no longer so much out of interest in the Jedwabne debate, but as a political weapon. With the upcoming elections the battle was launched to discredit the two most prominent politicians of the left – president A. Kwaśniewski and PM L. Miller. Once again suggestions were

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<sup>89</sup> Ibid.

<sup>90</sup> J. Kowalski, ‘Co nowego w Jedwabnem?’, *Nasz Dziennik*, 155: 5-6 July 2003, p. 28.

<sup>91</sup> CW, ‘Za co odpowiadają Polacy?’, *Nasz Dziennik*, 217: 17 Sep. 2003, p. 16.

<sup>92</sup> A. Hojda, ‘Kłamstwo jedwabieńskie’, *Nasz Dziennik*, 204: 31 Aug. 2004, p. 16.

<sup>93</sup> ‘Zasłużony dla tolerancji’, *Nasz Dziennik*, 270: 20 Nov. 2003, p. 16.

<sup>94</sup> ‘Ani wolne, ani niezależne’, *Nasz Dziennik*, 284: 6-7 Dec. 2003, p. 16.

<sup>95</sup> I. C. Pogonowski, ‘Agenda Sorosa’, *Nasz Dziennik*, 4: 6 Jan. 2004, p. 16.



made that Kwaśniewski apologized for Jedwabne in the name of the Polish nation,<sup>96</sup> which he actually did not. Father Jerzy Bajda addressed the president: 'You have proven that it is with the Jews that you find a common language and you solidarise with their stance, even when evidently false and hostile towards Poland. It was the case even at the time when an intervention was needed to defend Polish honour, and the honour of the Pope. Perhaps you do not feel you are a Pole, or you do not know what honour is [...]'.<sup>97</sup> I. C. Pogonowski blamed the president and his apology for the Jedwabne massacre for the bad and libellous press Poland and the Poles get especially in the US. According to him the *New York Times* published an article saying that 'for Christmas and Easter Polish Catholics get drunk and kill Jews', while protests to such misrepresentation were apparently answered by stating that 'Poles deserve such treatment for Jedwabne and Ejszyszki.' Further, the author claimed that Poles in America are treated worse than Blacks, and because of the reaction of officials to Jedwabne this will only deteriorate. Also, Pogonowski clarified that 'present libelling of the Polish Nation serves the interests of the Jewish claims movement and the Communist elite allied with it [...]'.<sup>98</sup> Here we can see a deeper, more personal and less ideological reason for the 'apologist' attitude of the Polish Diaspora members. Pogonowski probably all his life faced prejudice against the Poles in America. He might have seen the publicity in the American press about Jedwabne as undermining the good public relations work he and many others have done to challenge stereotypes about Polish stupidity and backwardness.

The Jedwabne case as presented in *Nasz Dziennik* had its villains and some heroes. T. Strzembosz was praised for being a 'guardian of the historical truth.'<sup>99</sup> The late Father Orłowski, the parish priest from Jedwabne, was hailed as a defender of the truth and the slandered ones.<sup>100</sup> Some even elevated his death of natural causes to martyrdom as he was said to 'die for the truth'.<sup>101</sup> This gained him a place in the pantheon of Jedwabne heroes, just next to the priest Kębiński who 'forgave the Jews

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<sup>96</sup> I. C. Pogonowski, 'Polityka przeprosin, skruchy i oszczerstw', *Nasz Dziennik*, 193: 20 Aug. 2003, p. 12.

<sup>97</sup> J. Bajda, 'List otwarty do Panów Aleksandra Kwaśniewskiego, prezydenta RP i Leszka Millera, premiera rządu RP', *Nasz Dziennik*, 143: 21-22 June 2003, p. 13.

<sup>98</sup> I. C. Pogonowski, 'Spuścizna Kwaśniewskiego i Millera', *Nasz Dziennik*, 218: 18 Sep. 2003, p. 11.

<sup>99</sup> 'Strażnik prawdy historycznej', *Nasz Dziennik*, 251: 25 Oct. 2004, p. 3.

<sup>100</sup> 'Odszedł do Pana', *Nasz Dziennik*, 101: 30 Apr.-1 May 2003, p. 2.

<sup>101</sup> J. Sawicki, W. A. Terlecki, 'Świadek prawdy. W 63. rocznicę niemieckiej zbrodni w Jedwabnem 10 lipca 1941', *Nasz Dziennik*, 161: 12 July 2004, pp. 8-9.



their sins', that is when they were being murdered by their neighbours. The anniversary of the Jedwabne massacre in July 2004 also served as a pretext to repeat that Jews were spies and NKVD collaborators and in this capacity they 'took the Polish homes' during the Soviet occupation. This particular accusation was an answer to the difficult truth that Poles took the property of the murdered Jews. It served not only as a cure for some possible moral discomfort of the current owners of such properties (though after the response of the Jedwabne inhabitants it can be questioned whether they had any remorse over the issue). In my opinion the accusation was meant to settle the accounts in case someone thought about reclaiming such property. Since Jews took the Polish homes, Poles were right to claim them back or to take Jewish ones. This simple calculation was probably meant not only to apply to Jedwabne but to the question of the post-Jewish property in Poland in general.

In short the material from 2003-2004 related to the Jedwabne massacre shows that two years on since the height of the debate, the theme is still very important for the newspaper, however the emphasis in the material no longer lies on arguing that Poles were not to be blamed for the massacre. The newspaper is very confident that the readers share its conviction about the unfairness of attributing the responsibility for the massacre to the Poles. Over the two years after 2001 *Nasz Dziennik* tended to build support for other causes and battles on the Jedwabne case. As a symbol of betrayal and false accusations the Jedwabne case was reused to reassert the image of Poland being oppressed by the Jews. In turn it becomes a weapon against 'Jewish profiteers'; that is the restitution of Jewish property or even of initiatives to commemorate the Holocaust. Moreover, the Jedwabne case became for *Nasz Dziennik* a tool, a specific litmus test, applied to distinguish the 'real Poles' from those who nominally may be Poles, but whose views disqualify them from identifying themselves as such. Ultimately, the status of not being a 'real Pole' to *Nasz Dziennik* is synonymous with being an enemy, often the term is used simply as an euphemism replacing the word Jew. Those who spoke about Jedwabne as the massacre committed by Poles, were marked out by *Nasz Dziennik* as 'citizens of something, unfortunately speaking Polish'. *Nasz Dziennik* had one advice for them, to get passports and leave.<sup>102</sup> Some attacks have been fiercer, personal and persistent, J. T. Gross and L. Kieres, director of IPN, were the favourite targets. I have already discussed the use of

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<sup>102</sup> 'Paszporty i w drogę!', *Nasz Dziennik*, 260: 7 Nov. 2003, p. 16.



the Jedwabne case as an argument in the pre-electoral fight against politicians from the left. To sum up, in the years 2000-2002 in the context of the Jedwabne debate, the arguments, often antisemitic, are used in a bid to reaffirm 'historical truth' as seen by *Nasz Dziennik* and the nationalists. Past 2002 we observe only reaffirmation of this 'truth' while the Jedwabne case serves as a tool against the ideological and political enemies of the newspaper and its milieu.

So far I have referred to the 'Jedwabne debate' as taking place in the Polish media, prominently in 2000-2002. In this chapter I presented almost exclusively what sort of discourse *Nasz Dziennik* was engaged in. Some summarised the Jedwabne debate generally as a competition between the two versions of the massacre regarding the Polish responsibility; 'the guilt version' versus the 'innocence version'.<sup>103</sup> However, a closer examination shows that only chronologically there was one media discussion. Factually we can speak about two main debates taking place in parallel. Only occasionally arguments from one side reached the other. I identify the 'official' debate and the parallel 'nationalistic' debate. Similarly, other scholars spoke about the 'main' and 'alternative' arenas of the Jedwabne controversy.<sup>104</sup> In my opinion, the term 'alternative' might be misleading as it underestimates the opinion forming power of such media as Radio Maryja.

The 'official' debate took place in: the national state television, national newspapers especially the biggest two dailies *Gazeta Wyborcza* and *Rzeczpospolita*, Roman Catholic religious periodicals for intelligentsia such as *Więź* and *Tygodnik Powszechny*, mainstream weeklies such as *Newsweek*, *Polityka*, *Wprost* and the more specialist historical journals. The parallel debate took place in the nationalistic press<sup>105</sup> of which *Nasz Dziennik* is the most popular representative, Radio Maryja and meetings organized by it, internet sites and nationalistic books.<sup>106</sup> Both debates were led by historians and journalists. The 'official' debate tended to ignore the 'nationalists', especially those of the extreme right-wing. The tone and level of argument of the latter might have justified this decision not to 'lower oneself to such level.' Gross who tried to stay away from the 'official' debate, would not even

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<sup>103</sup> A. Bikont, 'Seen from Jedwabne', *Yad Vashem Studies*, XXX (2002), pp. 7-21.

<sup>104</sup> P. Ciołkiewicz, 'Poszukiwanie granic odpowiedzialności zbiorowej. Debata o Jedwabnem na łamach „Gazety Wyborczej”', *Kultura i Społeczeństwo*, XLVIII/1 (Jan.-Mar. 2001), pp. 123-143.

<sup>105</sup> S. Kowalski, M. Tulli, *Zamiast procesu. Raport o mowie nienawisci*, (Warsaw, 2003).

<sup>106</sup> The most publicised ones: J. R. Nowak, *100 kłamstw J. T. Grossa o żydowskich sąsiadach w Jedwabnem*, (Warsaw, 2001); H. Pająk, *Jedwabne geszeft*, (Lublin, 2001).



contemplate the idea of answering nationalistic libels.<sup>107</sup> The ‘official’ debate concentrated on: how Poles should deal with the ‘dark past’,<sup>108</sup> whether Gross’s book can be classified as good scholarship, details about the massacre as well as the response of Jedwabne citizens to the revelations. Paweł Ciołkiewicz who analyzed the debate in *Gazeta Wyborcza* showed that the initial phase of the discussion was characterized by a ‘lack of clearly formed areas of conflict.’<sup>109</sup> After November 2000 the debate was dictated by arguments between scholars, since June 2001 mainly Gross and Strzembosz. The ‘officials’ were open to a real debate, *Gazeta Wyborcza* published pairs of articles in the weekend issues, presenting two different ways of moral questioning behind the massacre.<sup>110</sup> Those who steered the official debate were at pains to show impartiality in the search for historical truth. Hence the inclusion of the established historian, Prof. Tomasz Strzembosz, who used his authority to deny the key role of Poles in the massacre and who looked for justifications of the motives behind some participation of the Poles in the crime. He was especially vocal about the Jewish collaboration with the Soviet occupant prior to July 1941.<sup>111</sup>

The ‘nationalists’ did not include other than their point of view. They concentrated on exposing Gross’s lies and the Jewish anti-Polish conspiracy all in a bid to shift the blame away from Poles. In their publications Gross features only nominally, only as a personification of the Jewish conspiracy against Poland. He was ridiculed rather than debated with. Ultimately he had no voice in the ‘nationalistic’ debate, just as the scapegoat has no voice in the ‘scapegoating’ ritual. Thus, it would probably be more accurate to refer to the ‘nationalistic’ defense rather than debate. Another sign that the ‘nationalists’ led an ‘apologists’ campaign is how the intensity of the argument fluctuated. As I showed in this chapter the watersheds in the discussion in *Nasz Dziennik* were formed by responses to external events: Arnold’s film, Kwaśniewski’s speech or Kieres’s report.

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<sup>107</sup> J. T. Gross, *Wokół “Sąsiadów”. Polemiki i wyjaśnienia*, (Sejny, 2003), p. 5.

<sup>108</sup> J. Michlic, *Coming to terms with the ‘Dark Past: the Polish Debate about the Jedwabne Massacre*, ACTA: 21, (Jerusalem, 2002).

<sup>109</sup> P. Ciołkiewicz, ‘Poszukiwanie granic odpowiedzialności zbiorowej. Debata o Jedwabnem na łamach „Gazety Wyborczej”’, *Kultura i Społeczeństwo*, XLVIII /1 (Jan.-Mar. 2001), pp. 123-143.

<sup>110</sup> Ibid.

<sup>111</sup> For a summary in English of his views on Jewish collaboration, see: T. Strzembosz, ‘Inscribed in Professor Gutman’s Diary’, *Yad Vashem Studies*, XXX (2002), pp. 69-74.



Scholars have pointed out that the Jedwabne controversy was dominated by ‘ritual chaos’.<sup>112</sup> This was mainly the case in the ‘official’ debate where sides of the conflict were unable to find an agreement.<sup>113</sup> Often one proponent was inconsistent within his own argument.<sup>114</sup> The Gross-Strzembosz debate left the reader with the choice to make up his mind whether Poles did or did not slaughter Jews and whether Jews were or were not Soviet collaborators. In my opinion such disputes brought down the Jedwabne case to the level of a debating society competition. The reader was asked to vote on the motion ‘This House believes that Poles killed Jews in Jedwabne.’ Unfortunately the motion got amended into ‘This House believes that Mr Gross wrote the truth.’ In all fairness Gross saw the dangers of such trivialisation of the debate. Only reluctantly did he take part in it as otherwise Strzembosz’s voice would have dominated even the ‘official’ debate.<sup>115</sup>

Before I proceed to present what was the public response to the revelations about the Jedwabne massacre, I would like to stress that a large proportion of the Poles learned about Jedwabne only through the filters of the ‘nationalistic’ views. Others might have been confused by conflicting arguments in the mainstream debate. The debate preceded the results of the IPN investigation, thus Poles were left to form their opinion based on arguments rather than facts and forensic proof. The decision to interrupt the exhumation in Jedwabne has taken away the decisive voice from the IPN. Thus even after the investigation was closed the public was left to make up its mind about the Jedwabne massacre.

Most of Poles, about 80% of the population, heard about the Jedwabne massacre.<sup>116</sup> However, according to an extensive survey carried out in 2002 and analysed by I. Krzemiński and his team of scholars, 50.1% of the respondents expressed doubt about the very fact that the Jedwabne massacre happened at all.<sup>117</sup> More specifically, 24.7% agreed that ‘one cannot be sure that Jews were murdered in

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<sup>112</sup> For a definition see: M. Czyżewski, S. Kowalski, A. Piotrowski (ed.), *Rytualny chaos. Studium dyskursu publicznego*, (Krakow, 1997).

<sup>113</sup> P. Ciołkiewicz, ‘Poszukiwanie granic odpowiedzialności zbiorowej. Debata o Jedwabnem na łamach „Gazety Wyborczej”’, *Kultura i Społeczeństwo*, XLVIII/1 (Jan.-Mar. 2001), pp. 123-143.

<sup>114</sup> M. Bilewicz, *Wyjaśnienie Jedwabnego: antysemityzm i postrzeganie trudnej przeszłości*, in I. Krzemiński (ed.), *Antysemityzm w Polsce i na Ukrainie, raport z badań*, (Warsaw, 2004), p. 260.

<sup>115</sup> J. T. Gross, *Wokół “Sąsiadów”. Polemiki i wyjaśnienia*, (Sejny, 2003).

<sup>116</sup> D. Stola, ‘A Monument of Words’, *Yad Vashem Studies*, XXX (2002), p. 21-51; other research suggests that in August 2001 even 90% of the public heard about the massacre, see: CBOS surveys analysed by B. Wciórka, ‘Poles’ opinions about the crime in Jedwabne – changes in social consciousness’, *Polish Sociological Review*, I/137 (2002), pp. 117- 128.

<sup>117</sup> M. Bilewicz, *Wyjaśnienie Jedwabnego: antysemityzm I postrzeganie trudnej przeszłości*, in I. Krzemiński(ed.), *Antysemityzm w Polsce i na Ukrainie, raport z badań*, (Warsaw, 2004), p. 256



Jedwabne', while 25.4% say it is difficult to say. I find these results extraordinary as even the nationalistic media did not question the very fact that Jews were killed in Jedwabne. In addition, 35% of respondents asserted that the Germans murdered the Jews in Jedwabne, while 38% agreed that Poles in Jedwabne were forced by the Germans to murder the Jews.<sup>118</sup> M. Bilewicz who analysed this data suggested that: 'It seems that the respondents based their stances on the Jedwabne murder not on the media or other social representations, but on inner motives and a strongly internalized national identity, grounded in the feeling of exclusivity of their own suffering.'<sup>119</sup> I agree that the inner motives are the strongest, especially when forming opinion on complex issues. However, I would argue that public opinion, since 80% felt informed about the crime, made choices as to which arguments they followed or even which discussion they listened to. The respondents did not even have to refer to the nationalistic press, it might have been enough to hear Prof. Strzembosz. The respondents formed their opinions 'on inner motives and a strongly internalized national identity', but we cannot forget that there was an influential discussion that exploited those motives and identity. If the media, the Church officials and politicians were not so divided on the matter of Polish participation and guilt, it would have been easier for public opinion to come to terms with a more realistic collective self-image.

Public perception of the Jedwabne massacre, as well as the response of nationalistic media and even of such scholars as Prof. Strzembosz once again revealed the Polish 'image problem'. Poles see themselves collectively as victims of the Nazi and Soviet regimes, at the same time they cultivate the heroism myth because of the dramatic fight they led against these two powers. As Poland's honour was never soiled with official collaboration on a par with the Vichy government or Lithuanian auxiliary police, it is even easier to see Polish actions only in a positive light. All Polish collaborators only represented themselves. When compared with her neighbours, Poland indeed preserves a more honour-worthy image regarding her history during World War II. Why then does the Polish collective memory reject so strongly the 'dark past'? As I explained in the chapter on the Holocaust, collective memory avoids ambiguities and prefers simpler, more straightforward views on complex events.

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<sup>118</sup> M. Bilewicz, *Wyjaśnienie Jedwabnego...* p. 255.

<sup>119</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 257.



Moreover, as the material in *Nasz Dziennik* shows, the perception of the Jedwabne massacre is bound to the persistent negative image of the Jew and the mythologized involvement of the Jews in the Soviet security apparatus. The negative myths about the Jew are still strong enough for Poles to reject any positive image of the group, be it even its portrayal as victims. In addition, *Nasz Dziennik* and many Poles failed to see Jedwabne neighbours, ethnic Poles, as collaborators of the Nazi regime. Polish collaboration with Soviet or Nazi regime still remains a taboo. The nationalistic version of the massacre maintains that Germans played a key role in it, Poles, if any, were forced to participate. Curiously at the same time *Nasz Dziennik* defends the Poles as those who only ‘punished the Soviet collaborators’. In Krzemiński’s report 11.5% of respondents agree with such a view.<sup>120</sup> This leads me to argue that even in *Nasz Dziennik* there are at least two different responses to the Jedwabne massacre. The one that puts all the blame on the Germans sees the massacre committed against the Jews as an atrocity. This means that Jews are perceived as human beings. The crime is seen as so horrific that one refuses to link it with the over idealised image of the Polish nation. Those who look for ways to justify why some Poles took part in the Jedwabne massacre essentially do not see this event as morally repulsive. By contrast, similar crimes or even less gruesome but committed against Poles are viewed as extraordinary atrocities (see chapter VII: ‘Crimes committed against Poles’). This is because authors such as Nowak or Pogonowski do not perceive Jews, even Jewish children and women victims, as ordinary people. The Jew is viewed as being evil; here in particular this evil’s name is Soviet collaboration. Elsewhere, this Jewish evil is identified as bloodthirsty capitalism, simple greed or conspiracies to rule the world. The image of the Jew is so negative that some authors even see Jewish children from such perspective. If they saw at least some inhabitants of Jedwabne as ordinary neighbours, they would have condemned the crime at least partially, acknowledged that women and children were victims of unjustified savagery.

Essentially, the negative, sometimes even diabolical image of the Jews is built on political and economic arguments. The ‘chimera’<sup>121</sup> element in this discourse appears as authors refer to world Jewish conspiracies. In *Nasz Dziennik* there are

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<sup>120</sup> I. Krzemiński (ed.), *Antysemityzm w Polsce i na Ukrainie, raport z badań*, (Warsaw, 2004), p. 255.

<sup>121</sup> G. I. Langmuir, *Toward a definition of Antisemitism*, in: H. Fein (ed.), *The Persisting Question. Sociological and social contexts of modern antisemitism*, (New York, 1987), p. 117.



some hints that some authors who mythologize Jews as evil do so as a result of their religious convictions. Already mentioned, Sawicki and Terlecki, defended the Jedwabne parish priest from accusations of not stopping the massacre with the praise that priest Kębiński ‘forgave the Jews their sins’.<sup>122</sup> It is true that from the Catholic priest’s point of view such a deed is a commendable one. Even so this cannot replace an effort to save lives. The gesture of the priest and the way it was reported in the article show that Jews as sinful beings were expected to be punished. For what sins exactly? Were the Jedwabne children forgiven for their collaboration with the NKVD? I will discuss the influence of religion on the negative image of the Jew in chapter X: The religious roots of antisemitism. Here I just would like to alert the reader to the fact that not only political arguments built the image that in turn is being used to justify the Jedwabne massacre. At the same time it has to be stressed that the majority of texts on Jedwabne were free from religious overtones.

The Jedwabne controversy was a chance to improve strained Polish-Jewish relations. More important, it was a chance for the Poles to objectify their self-image by confronting the ‘dark past’. Instead, Jedwabne gave rise to a wave of antisemitism in the nationalistic media which had no precedent in democratic Poland. The controversy also exposed the inability of the intelligentsia to influence public opinion. Nevertheless, the Polish intelligentsia congratulates itself for having such a constructive discussion about a controversial topic. What one may find most disappointing in the ‘official’ discussion was how it got driven towards divagations whether Poles were inspired, encouraged, pressured or coerced by the Germans to commit the massacre. As Marci Shore put it: ‘Neither the critical presence of the Germans nor the actions of the Poles has been the object of much dispute. Debate, rather, has focused on what could perhaps be described as matters of nuance: Did the Germans force the local Poles to murder the Jews? Or did they order the Poles to commit the massacre but decline to employ physical coercion? Perhaps the Germans merely encouraged the Poles? Suggested that they ...? Invited them to ...? Approved in advance? Gave their assent?’<sup>123</sup> While questions of why Poles did not ignore, sabotage or resist the alleged orders were hardly posed, especially in the nationalistic

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<sup>122</sup> J. Sawicki, W. A. Terlecki, ‘Świadek prawdy. W 63. rocznicę niemieckiej zbrodni w Jedwabnem 10 lipca 1941’, *Nasz Dziennik*, 161: 12 July 2004, pp. 8-9.

<sup>123</sup> M. Shore, ‘Conversing with Ghosts. Jedwabne, *Żydokomuna*, and Totalitarianism’, *Kritika: Explorations in Russian and Eurasian History*, 6/2 (Spring 2005), pp. 345-374.



press. This excuse for lack of resistance stands in contrast with the descriptions of Polish heroism elsewhere. In addition, in the nationalistic press while there were no questions about Poles refusing the orders, Jews were blamed for not forming resistance to the oppressors.

*Nasz Dziennik* and nationalistic media benefited from the confusion of the mainstream debate. Their version of events was much more straightforward and presented in an absolutely authoritative way, therefore easier to absorb by an average reader. In addition, for *Nasz Dziennik* the Jedwabne controversy pushed the boundaries of inseminating hatred against the Jews. It is difficult to assess to what extent the nationalistic media influenced public opinion, but it certainly should not be underestimated.

The debate took place on many levels; however at the centre of all discussions was the self-image of the Poles and the threat the Jedwabne controversy posed to this idealised image. The response to the media coverage and the debate in Jedwabne itself was dictated by the preservation of the good image of the community. In some cases, it even was dictated by the need to preserve the good name of one's family by denying participation in the massacre of family members. In a way this attitude extended to a larger section of Polish society. Poles feared that their suffering during the Nazi and Soviet occupations might be overshadowed. The process of collective memory, especially in such a traumatic case as the Jedwabne massacre, called for denial and rejection of the difficult past. *Nasz Dziennik* and the nationalistic media fully exploited these initial reactions. This was done in the name of preservation of the self-image of Poles constructed on heroism and martyrdom. More important, in the nationalistic milieu the Jedwabne debate caused a conflict over its own image. As the main debate unwrapped the layers of mystery, myth and uncertainty about the massacre it got down to the key question: where did the hatred come from that turned neighbours against neighbours? Many commentators pointed to the Soviet occupation as the explanation for the crime; their arguments ranging from the decline in law and order, the general brutalisation of society to the leitmotif of Jewish collaboration. Often explaining of the crime mingled with its justification. (The myth about Żydokomuna has been discussed at length, most scholars dismiss it and I will address it in the chapter VII: 'Crimes...'). However, many remained unconvinced that merely three years of Soviet occupation undermined the allegedly good relationships between ethnic Polish and Polish-Jewish neighbours. The questions have been raised about



Endecja's strong support in the area before and during the war. The Jewish testimonies speak about worsening of the Polish-Jewish relations in the 1930s due to the activities of National Democrats, especially their youth groups.<sup>124</sup> Thus, in the Jedwabne debate the nationalists not only were defending the good name of Poland but foremost the good name of their ideology. The ideology that rejects the right to belong to the Polish nation on the basis of civic criteria, stresses Catholicism as a marker of true Polishness and refuses equal rights to minorities. The Jedwabne massacre bears testimony that when fed with hatred and prejudice even ordinary people, given special circumstances, are able to commit atrocities. *Nasz Dziennik* cannot agree with it because it continues in the footsteps of the pre-war nationalistic newspapers, spreading hatred and prejudice, not only against the Jews.

The intensified debate over the Jedwabne massacre in *Nasz Dziennik* exposed the newspaper's primitive approach to history; when we beat them up it is good, when they beat us up it is bad. This approach is all too familiar to me as it was a part of patriotic history education in the Polish school system in the early 1990s. However critical one might be of the 'main' Jedwabne debate, it has to be praised for challenging this one-dimensional approach to history. As a direct result of the Jedwabne controversy the Polish media started discussing painful relations between Poles and Ukrainians and Poles and Belarusians. After Jedwabne the Polish self-image as upheld by the nationalists has been repeatedly challenged with stories of Poles committing atrocities against others. A. Arnold who was attacked for her film on Jedwabne, directed a documentary about Romuald Rajs 'Bury', an underground fighter, whose soldiers murdered a group of Belarusians in 1944. *Nasz Dziennik* responded with fury to this film, justifying the murder as the victims 'were killed as Communists' – the same arguments as were used in the Jedwabne controversy.<sup>125</sup> It quoted Rajs's son outrage that 'there is a tendency now to slur Poles with accusations that they murdered Jews, Belarusians and Germans.'<sup>126</sup> *Nasz Dziennik* clearly rejects the version of Polish history with pages describing problematic moments. However, after Jedwabne the 'main' debate has already moved on, understanding that just as the

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<sup>124</sup> A. Polonsky, J. Michlic (eds.), *The neighbors respond. The controversy over the Jedwabne massacre in Poland*, (Princeton, 2004); A. Bikont, 'Seen from Jedwabne', *Yad Vashem Studies*, XXX: 2002, pp. 7-21.

<sup>125</sup> L. Żebrowski, "'Utrwalanie władzy ludowej", czyli walka trwa...', *Nasz Dziennik*, 278: 29-30 Nov. 2003, pp. 20-21; Z. Baranowski, 'Szkalowanie pamięci "Burego"', *Nasz Dziennik*, 258: 5 Nov. 2003, p. 2.

<sup>126</sup> Z. Baranowski, 'Podważanie prawomocnego wyroku', *Nasz Dziennik*, 259: 6 Nov. 2003, p. 2.



Poles have a right to commemorate the Wołyń ethnic cleansings or Katyń murders and expect the co-patriots of the perpetrators at least to acknowledge these crimes, so can other nations expect the same from them. Today's history does not speak with one voice; it is a choir and the Jedwabne controversy, with all its chaos and drawbacks, introduced Poles to this new way of perceiving history.<sup>127</sup>

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<sup>127</sup> Compare: J. Żakowski, *Rewanż pamięci*, (Warsaw, 2002).



## Chapter V

### The IPN

The Institute of National Remembrance (Instytut Pamięci Narodowej, hereafter the IPN) – Commission of the Prosecution of Crimes against the Polish Nation was created by the Polish Parliament and subsequently brought to life on 18 December 1998. The Institute is headed by the President of the Institute whose post is independent of the state authorities. Professor Leon Kieres was elected by the Parliament to be the first President of the IPN on 8 June 2000. The president is elected for a five-year term. The Institute started its work on 1 July 2000.

‘The Institute of National Remembrance focuses its activities on the fifty years of the history of the Polish nation from 1939 to 1989, which is a period unprecedented in the intensity of change. It encompasses the events that had an impact on Poland and Polish society during World War II, the German and Soviet occupations, and the period when Poland was subject to Communist power.’<sup>1</sup>

For the political circles linked to *Nasz Dziennik* the establishment of the IPN brought hope for gaining political capital as finally ‘the files would be opened’. This meant especially the Communist archives or more correctly what was randomly salvaged from them after 1989. This expression in Polish does not imply an exciting opportunity for scholarly research. Rather ‘opening of files’ functions in various ways to describe a prelude to a witch-hunt or a means of reshuffling the political scene. With the establishment of the IPN the political right expected a swift disclosure of the damaging materials that would finally discredit their opponents from the left. This may seem a bit naïve as most of the MPs from the left were too young to have been involved in damaging decision making during the Communist regime. Also, the files are often so incomplete and ambiguous that even such figures as Lech Wałęsa had to fight to prove that they were not collaborators of the regime.

*Nasz Dziennik* expected that the IPN would also disclose all the cases of Polish martyrdom, and the first independent investigation into the Katyń murder was on the top of the list.<sup>2</sup> However, to the great disappointment of some, the first high

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<sup>1</sup> [http://www.ipn.gov.pl/index\\_eng.html](http://www.ipn.gov.pl/index_eng.html)

<sup>2</sup> Over the years *Nasz Dziennik* became bitterly disappointed that in the Katyń case the fragile relations with Russia took priority over standing the moral ground and forcing the Russian authorities to admit



profile case which the Institute investigated was the massacre of Jews in Jedwabne, a crime that challenged the whitewashed image of Poles during the occupation. Actually, the case attracted so much media attention that despite the fact that, together with a similar case, it took up only 5% of the IPN's investigations, the institution started being linked exclusively with Jedwabne.<sup>3</sup>

The first annual report made by the head of the IPN, Leon Kieres, stirred up a fierce debate in the Parliament. Kieres faced personal attacks, among them that by Antoni Stryjewski (LPR<sup>4</sup>) who accused him of not being a Pole concerned about the truth in Polish history.<sup>5</sup> Thereafter, Kieres's right to call himself a 'true Pole' has been questioned, especially in the right wing media.

*Nasz Dziennik* published the parliamentary address of an MP, Antoni Macierewicz (then LPR) who noted the hopes that the IPN 'would put the matters in the right dimension, would call crime a crime and heroism a heroism and bring justice. Instead, the prosecutors and investigators seemed to give more attention to the cases aimed against the Poles rather than perusing the crimes committed against the Poles.'<sup>6</sup> Further, the MP was outraged that the IPN was delaying the opening of the archives to the public. Also, he objected that 'we still do not know anything about the mechanism behind the provocations in Rzeszów, Kraków and Kielce, when the UB [Security Office] and the NKVD murdered Jews in order to put the blame on the Poles'. Finally, Macierewicz accused Kieres of 'stoning the Polish Nation' because of the way the Jedwabne case had been investigated but mainly because he dared to state that Poles murdered those Jews 'and that even before the investigation was closed'.

*Nasz Dziennik* many times accused the IPN of libelling the Poles. Stanisław Zawadzki in his article described it as 'the witch-hunt against the Poles'. He accused the IPN of making a hasty judgement on the Jedwabne murder 'without presenting reliable evidence and disclosing the perpetrators, basing [the judgement] on the conflicting testimonies.'<sup>7</sup> He blamed the IPN for 'not finding the documents confirming that the German troops were present in the Jedwabne region', he also complained about the interrupted exhumation. While he acknowledged that the IPN

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that the Katyń crime was a genocide and to apologise for it. See: G. Fuławka, 'Instytut Ponizania Narodu?', *Nasz Dziennik*, 186: 10 July 2004, p. 16.

<sup>3</sup> 'Przemilczane zbrodnie na Polakach', *Nasz Dziennik*, 274: 4 Nov. 2002, p. 4.

<sup>4</sup> Liga Polskich Rodzin [League of Polish Families].

<sup>5</sup> 'Rozbieranie słówek', *Gazeta Wyborcza*, 58: 9-10 Mar. 2002, p. 3.

<sup>6</sup> 'Niechęć do ujawniania prawdy', *Nasz Dziennik*, 52: 2-3 Mar. 2002, p.16.

<sup>7</sup> 'Nagonka na Polaków', *Nasz Dziennik*, 160: 11 July 2002, pp. 1, 3.



prosecutors challenged Gross regarding the number of Jewish victims in Jedwabne, he was disappointed that ‘they did not address other lies of the author of the anti-Polish publication.’

When Dr Andrzej Szczesniak was asked to comment on the IPN findings he summed them up as ‘scandal’ and ‘above all embarrassment of the Poles, humiliation, arousing the sense of guilt and subservience towards different demands.’<sup>8</sup> These demands he defined as the taking over of properties and ‘robbing 65 million US dollars’. The article was peppered with quotations from the German and American press writing about the ‘planned’ massacre of the Jews and the decisive role of Poles in Jedwabne. These examples were meant to illustrate how damaging for the Polish image in the world this ‘lousy’ investigation of the IPN was.

The whole series of articles entitled ‘Przemilczane zbrodnie na Polakach’ (see chapter VII: ‘Crimes committed against Poles’) by Prof. Jerzy Robert Nowak recalled the crimes on which the IPN should concentrate. The crimes according to Nowak were overlooked because the IPN did not hurry to investigate ‘the criminal acts committed against Poles by the Bolshevised Jews. Committed not over a few weeks, but during a year and a half of the Soviet occupation [...] And later crimes of Berman, Fejgin, Rózański, Światło, Brystygierowa, Romkowski, Wolińska, Morel and Stefan Michnik.’ Also, Nowak did not fall for the declarations of Kieres that 95% of the IPN’s work is formed by cases of crimes committed against Poles. Nowak asked ‘where are the results of those 95% of cases? When did Mr Kieres talk about them in detail and publicly? Is the IPN a Polish Institute or rather a Jewish Institute of National Remembrance or Wiesenthal Centre No. 2?’<sup>9</sup>

In other articles Nowak stressed that the IPN does not fulfil its mission and is a malfunctioning institution. He dismissed the IPN’s findings as ‘fuszerka [sloppy work – very colloquial Polish]’ and pointed to ‘astonishing omissions’ in the Jedwabne investigation, especially regarding the German coercion used against the Poles in Jedwabne, failure to ‘survey all possible archives’ and refusal to challenge ‘Gross’s lies’.

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<sup>8</sup> S. Zawadzki, K. Cegielska, W. Maszewski, ‘Nagonka na Polaków’, *Nasz Dziennik*, 160: 11 July 2002, pp. 1, 3.

<sup>9</sup> J. R. Nowak, ‘Przemilczane zbrodnie na Polakach’, *Nasz Dziennik*, 274: 4 Nov. 2002, p. 4.



Later the word ‘fuszerka’ became a synonym for the Jedwabne investigation and especially the IPN’s publication *Wokół Jedwabnego*<sup>10</sup> became a target for fierce criticism. Nowak thought that the work was ‘carried without any sense’ and it was a ‘zsymp [rubbish pile]’ of different genre studies and documents.<sup>11</sup> The main accusation was that the book omitted ‘the Jewish crimes’. Also, Nowak accused the authors of being too politically correct in their ‘super indulgence towards the lies of J.T. Gross’ and of bowing to the lobby that forces Poland to pay a ‘ransom’. Finally, the contributors of *Wokół Jedwabnego* were accused of presenting a very low level of scholarship.

Jan Kubiszyn also criticised *Wokół Jedwabnego*, although not as furiously as Nowak did. The article focused on the work of Edmund Dymitrow<sup>12</sup> and the sources he allegedly omitted. According to the author these sources provided proof that the Germans played a key role in the Jedwabne massacre. For a person who is not a specialist in this topic it is difficult to assess the value of this survey. However, the author hoped that the reader would agree that: ‘Unfortunately one has to say that even superficial analysis and assessment of the German sources lead to a sad conclusion. The publication of the IPN is just another link in the chicanery carried out by the Institute’. If the reader were unclear as to what conspiracy the author had in mind, the caption under a picture of Jews praying in Jedwabne clarified: ‘*Wokół Jedwabnego* enforces the anti-Polish stereotype invented by J.T. Gross.’<sup>13</sup>

*Nasz Dziennik* perceived *Wokół Jedwabnego* as a work of propaganda. Thus it eagerly quoted the words of Prof. Tomasz Strzembosz who said in a debate about the book ‘the works to clarify this case were drowned out by the media frenzy and by the pressure of political correctness, to which everyone gave in.’<sup>14</sup>

In light of the above articles one could conclude that the IPN only conspires and is merely occupied with the Jedwabne case. However, even *Nasz Dziennik* had been reporting about numerous initiatives of the Institute, among many others: the Internet report on the Koniuchy<sup>15</sup> murder case and the investigation of the crimes

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<sup>10</sup> P. Machcewicz, K. Persak, (eds.), *Wokół Jedwabnego*, (Warsaw, 2002).

<sup>11</sup> R. Popielewicz, ‘Ustalenia IPN to fuszerka’, *Nasz Dziennik*, 260: 7 Nov. 2001, pp. 8-10.

<sup>12</sup> E. Dymitrow, *Oddziały operacyjne niemieckiej Policji Bezpieczeństwa i Służby Bezpieczeństwa a początek zagłady Żydów w Łomżyńskim i na Białostocczyźnie*, in *Wokół Jedwabnego* (I), (Warsaw 2002), pp. 273-352.

<sup>13</sup> J. Kubiszyn, ‘Jedwabne – droga do prawdy?’, *Nasz Dziennik*, 289: 12 Dec. 2002, pp. 8-9.

<sup>14</sup> ‘Jedwabne – w służbie propagandy’, *Nasz Dziennik*, 290: 13 Dec. 2002, p. 3.

<sup>15</sup> *Nasz Dziennik*, 268: 18 Nov. 2002, p. 4.



committed in Brzostowica Mała.<sup>16</sup> (Both massacres were committed on Polish civilians by partisans during the war, according to the newspaper by Jewish criminals posing for partisans, see chapter VII.) Even under the critical article by Nowak about *Wokół Jedwabnego* we find one of the IPN's advertisements, which invited the reader to a discussion, exhibition and a film screening about the soldiers of NSZ<sup>17</sup>. From 2005 *Nasz Dziennik* slightly changed its attitude towards the IPN, the newspaper uses its findings whenever it suits the right-wing agenda for example when the IPN researched persecution of the Church by the Communist security apparatus. However, *Nasz Dziennik* attacked the Institute when it revealed cases of collaboration of some priests with the Security Office.

To sum up, the IPN has been not only criticised, but also attacked by *Nasz Dziennik* because such a hurtful case as Jedwabne was so widely publicised, which actually had nothing to do with the Institute. The media stirred up the sensational and often unhealthy atmosphere, which was a misfortune for the IPN as Jedwabne overshadowed all other cases investigated by this institution. On the other hand, as a state-funded institution the IPN is relying on the state budget, therefore it is not a fully independent unit. Any government to some extent may try to politicise the work of the Institute. Hence the discussion about the work and autonomy of the IPN is a very valid one. However, *Nasz Dziennik* and its polemics prove that a constructive discussion was not the priority in this case. The newspaper wanted to put pressure on the IPN so its ideas would be emulated in the Institute's findings. The atmosphere created by *Nasz Dziennik* was one of influencing opinion without looking too much at the evidence. In 2005 when the right-wing MPs joined the coalition government, one of their first plans was to reopen the Jedwabne investigation.<sup>18</sup> This is a very good indication of the pressures put on this institution.

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<sup>16</sup> *Nasz Dziennik*, 206: 4 Sep. 2001, p. 1, 2.

<sup>17</sup> Narodowe Siły Zbrojne [National Armed Forces].

<sup>18</sup> W. Czuchnowski, R. Romanowski, 'Spore zmiany w IPN: prawica bierze teczki', *Gazeta Wyborcza*, p. 6.



## Chapter VI

### The Kielce 1946 pogrom

While historical truths are complex and can be analysed from many angles, the collective memory tends to simplify those truths. The most recent works on the topic show the complexity of the events in Kielce as well as many pitfalls awaiting those who try to assess them.<sup>1</sup> Collective Jewish memory tends to view the Kielce 1946 pogrom as a pinnacle of Polish savagery. So soon after the crematories stopped burning, after 90% of Polish Jews had perished, a Polish mob massacred Jewish men, women and children. The massacre was prompted by the spark of a rumour about Jews kidnapping a boy. Prejudice straight from the Middle Ages showed itself alive and well in 20<sup>th</sup> century Kielce. Polish collective memory wants to distance itself from the blood thirsty mob. It points to the complexity of the political situation, Jewish influence in the security apparatus, the not so clear role of the militia, army and Security Office members at the site where the pogrom happened. That is collective memory purging itself from difficult memories, but some historians even tried to reduce the Kielce pogrom to a Soviet provocation.<sup>2</sup> Right-wing nationalists, and also writers in *Nasz Dziennik*, explained the pogrom as staged by Zionists.<sup>3</sup>

In a series of ten extensive essays Prof. Jerzy Robert Nowak sought to disclose ‘the truth about the Kielce’ pogrom in 1946. The essays were published from July to September 2002 in the section entitled, in a rather striking way, ‘Thought is a weapon’. The articles promised to inform the reader about the ‘truth’ behind the already known facts concerning the pogrom of the Jews in Kielce that occurred on 4 July 1946. According to Nowak, the happenings in Kielce were ‘a Soviet provocation organised to divert the attention of the West from the falsified referendum results in Poland and from the discussion uncomfortable for Russia about the Katyń murders’.<sup>4</sup> He disclosed the role of militia and army in the event and also that of an officer of Soviet intelligence, Mikhail Aleksandrovich Diomin, in order to support his theory

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<sup>1</sup> See: B. Szaynok, *Pogrom Żydów w Kielcach 4 lipca 1946*, (Warsaw, 1992); also by B. Szaynok a comprehensive survey of the latest historical discussion on Kielce on: [www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/Holocaust/Kielce.html](http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/Holocaust/Kielce.html)

<sup>2</sup> M. Chęciński, *Poland. Communism-Nationalism-Anti-semitism*, (New York, 1982).

<sup>3</sup> See highly controversial and favoured by nationalistic media K. Kąkolewski, *Umarły cmentarz*, (Warsaw, 1996).

<sup>4</sup> ‘Prawda o Kielcach 1946 r. (1)’, *Nasz Dziennik*, 154: 4 July 2002, pp. 10-11.



that the NKVD was looking for an ‘anti-Katyń’.<sup>5</sup> He also listed similar tragic events that after the year 1944 took place in Slovakia, Hungary and Ukraine. The Communist authorities in those countries allegedly designed these pogroms in order to strengthen Jewish sympathies with the regime and to create an illusion that ‘only the Red Army in those countries could defend the Jews from the local “nationalists” and “reactionaries”’.<sup>6</sup>

Further, Nowak outlined the Communist propaganda that blamed ‘reactionaries’ linked to General Władysław Anders, a politician of the Polish government-in-exile in London, for this pogrom. Also, he explored the reasons why ‘the Communist authorities tried to publicise the crime to the maximum’<sup>7</sup>, shaming Poland and the Poles. The author criticised those who copy the Communist propaganda and ascribe the crime to the backwardness of the Kielce residents. He accused Krystyna Kersten<sup>8</sup> of ‘diverting attention from the actual role of the NKVD as the instigator and organiser of these crimes’.<sup>9</sup> According to Nowak: ‘Speculations about the ignorance of the Kielce residents, their horrifying backwardness and beliefs in the medieval tales about the blood libel, shadowing the truth about the existence in Kielce of a variety of political, economical and social tensions relating to the Jews’. More specifically, he saw the reasons for these tensions in the high living standard of the Kielce Jews and abuses of power by the Jewish dignitaries.<sup>10</sup>

When analysing the pogrom Nowak concentrated on estimates of the number of the mob that accounted for 300 people outside the house inhabited by Jews and on the fact that the Soviet soldiers in the area did not react to the pogrom.<sup>11</sup> Subsequent essays concentrated on proving that the trial of eight civilians accused of participating in the massacre was a set-up and thus unreliable.<sup>12</sup> He also described how the local clergy tried to stop the pogrom but their efforts were cut short by the authorities.<sup>13</sup> Further, Nowak wrote about the role of the Jews in the ‘Stalinization’ of Poland.<sup>14</sup> Thereafter, the author presented ‘Moscow’s calculations’ – the reasons for and the

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<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

<sup>7</sup> ‘Prawda o Kielcach 1946 r. (2)’, *Nasz Dziennik*, 161: 12 July 2002, pp. 10-11.

<sup>8</sup> See: K. Kersten, *Polacy, Żydzi, komunizm. Anatomia półprawd 1939-68*, (Warsaw, 1992).

<sup>9</sup> ‘Prawda o Kielcach 1946 r. (2)’, *Nasz Dziennik*, 161: 12 July 2002, pp. 10- 11.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid.

<sup>11</sup> ‘Prawda o Kielcach 1946 r. (3)’, *Nasz Dziennik*, 167: 19 July 2002, pp. 10-11.

<sup>12</sup> ‘Prawda o Kielcach 1946 r. (4)’, *Nasz Dziennik*, 173: 26 July 2002, pp. 10-11.

<sup>13</sup> ‘Prawda o Kielcach 1946 r. (5)’, *Nasz Dziennik*, 179: 2 Aug. 2002, pp. 10-11.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid.



goal of the pogrom – as follows: undermining the morale of the Polish Catholics and of those underground patriots who were still fighting the Soviet occupier, as well as undermining the position of the Polish government in exile and of General Anders himself. Another reason was to divert the attention from the forged results of the referendum. Because of the blame put on the Poles, international public opinion was unlikely to defend a nation capable of such barbarism. Finally, Nowak stated that the staging of this pogrom was supposed to ‘convince the Jews, who were placed in the middle rank positions in the UB [Security Office], the army and the party, that all the time they [were] facing deadly threats from Polish society [...]’.<sup>15</sup>

In addition, Nowak identified the Jews themselves as plotting and staging the Kielce pogrom together with Stalin. According to Nowak, the Zionists deliberately provoked the mass exodus of the Jews to Palestine, in order to force the creation of the Israeli state.<sup>16</sup> In support of his theory, Nowak quoted Krzysztof Kąkolewski, who in his book wrote how around the time when the Kielce pogrom happened the ‘secret passes [at the borders] have been opened in order to allow the Jews to leave Poland’.<sup>17</sup>

The series of essays ended in a surprising parallel being drawn between the Kielce pogrom and the massacre of the Arabs in Deir Yassin that took place on April 1948. The author saw a grave injustice in the fact the Poles are (according to him wrongly) accused of the pogrom, while Jews, ‘Israeli representatives – ambassador S. Weiss or Prof. I. Gutman’ refuse to apologise for Deir Yassin.<sup>18</sup> Nowak in detail described the bloody crimes of the Jews, with the special attention given to the cases of murders committed on children. I think it is very telling that in his descriptions of the Kielce pogrom Nowak did not mention the brutally murdered Jewish child victims.<sup>19</sup>

The message that emerges from the series of articles is clear: not the Poles but the Soviets, with some help from the Jews, staged the pogrom in Kielce. The fact that some Polish civilians got stirred up against the Jews in this event Nowak explains as a consequence of the Jewish involvement in the ‘Stalinization’ of Poland. The last article was meant to deny the Jews any moral right to ask the Poles for an apology. As

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<sup>15</sup> Ibid.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid.

<sup>17</sup> K. Kąkolewski, *Umarły cmentarz*, (Warsaw, 1996), p. 191.

<sup>18</sup> ‘Prawda o Kielcach 1946 r. (9)’, *Nasz Dziennik*, 198: 30 Aug. 2002, pp. 10-11.

<sup>19</sup> See: T. Wiącek, *Zabić Żyda!*, (Kraków, 1992).



the article brought on the example of Deir Yassin, the crimes of the Jews were presented as even worse than those, which they projected on the Poles. The last article focused exclusively on Deir Yassin and describes how 'Jewish terrorists-murderers looted anything they could in the homes of their Arab victims'.<sup>20</sup> Here we see exactly the same scheme of getting rid of the guilt as in the case of Jedwabne or the Holocaust. Even if the author admits that some Poles killed some Jews, it was only because they were forced or provoked and they cannot be blamed for the crime because of all the crimes that the Jews have committed. The articles on Kielce were published during the renewed debate on Jedwabne that re-emerged at the time of the anniversary of the massacre. That those articles were a direct response to the Jedwabne case was even spelled out in the last article. Nowak asked why Adam Michnik<sup>21</sup> 'who so eagerly lectures the Poles on the Jedwabne case [...], cannot self-examine the Jewish responsibility for the beastly crime in Deir Yassin'.<sup>22</sup> Somehow atonement for the Poles comes automatically since the Jews allegedly committed greater crimes.

The articles about the Kielce pogrom mainly served *Nasz Dziennik* as a reinforcement of the message about the Jedwabne massacre. Kielce was supposed to show how Jews manipulate the facts and put the blame on Poles without foundation. Just as in the discussion about Jedwabne *Nasz Dziennik* failed to answer why some Poles, ordinary citizens,<sup>23</sup> responded to the alleged provocations? As *Nasz Dziennik* stopped devoting its attention to Jedwabne to the extent it did in 2001-2002, it also lost interest in the Kielce pogrom. Only occasionally were brief references made, usually reinforcing the message about the NKVD's involvement in staging the pogrom.<sup>24</sup> The Kielce pogrom as a topic for a major debate returned in *Nasz Dziennik*, as in other media, just before the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the events in 2006. The topic returned with the news of the publication of a new book by Jan T. Gross – *Fear: anti-Semitism in Poland after Auschwitz*.<sup>25</sup> The mainstream media have not denied the Polish responsibility nor did they look to the State's provocation theory to explain the

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<sup>20</sup> 'Prawda o Kielcach 1946 r. (10)', *Nasz Dziennik*, 208: 6 Sep. 2002, pp. 10-11.

<sup>21</sup> The chief editor of *Gazeta Wyborcza*.

<sup>22</sup> 'Prawda o Kielcach 1946 r. (10)', *Nasz Dziennik*, 208: 6 Sep. 2002, pp. 10- 11.

<sup>23</sup> B. Szaynok, *Pogrom Żydów w Kielcach 4 lipca 1946*, (Warsaw, 1992), p. 7.

<sup>24</sup> I. C. Pogonowski, 'Terror Begina i Shamira', *Nasz Dziennik*, 194: 21 Aug. 2003, p.10.

<sup>25</sup> J. T. Gross, *Fear: Anti-Semitism in Poland After Auschwitz. An Essay in Historical Interpretation*, (New York, 2006).



pogrom.<sup>26</sup> However, an alternative debate was carried out in the nationalistic media, in *Nasz Dziennik* Jerzy R. Nowak attacked Gross for his ‘virulent anti-Polonism’ aimed at blackmailing Poland into paying a hefty ‘ransom’ to the Jews. Although Nowak was reviewing Gross’s book, most of the two articles lacked any new information. Mainly he repeated what he has been writing in the past blaming the NKVD and the Zionists for staging the Kielce pogrom.<sup>27</sup>

While *Nasz Dziennik*’s response was not surprising, the fact that the second most popular daily, *Rzeczpospolita*, gave a platform to more right-wing voices is a worrying sign. The newspaper printed an article by Stefan Bratkowski who claimed that Gross’s book, and Elie Wiesel’s review of it, reveals a deep resentment towards the Poles. Bratkowski also claimed that most of the Jewish victims of Polish violence after 1945 died not as Jews but as members of the KBW (Internal Security Corps).<sup>28</sup> *Rzeczpospolita* also published an article by historian Marek Jan Chodakiewicz who accused Gross of seeing sources of prejudice and evil in Polish religion, tradition and patriotism. He also claimed that Gross ‘identified the sources of evil of the “Polish antisemitism” in a way that emulates the Stalinist propaganda’.<sup>29</sup> *Rzeczpospolita* published a balanced article about Kielce by Andrzej Kaczyński, the first journalist who wrote about the Jedwabne massacre on the pages of this newspaper.<sup>30</sup> However, one wonders whether the fact that it gave a platform to more right-wing voices is not a nod towards the current government (the newspaper is partially owned by the state).

Krystyna Kersten cautioned historians writing about the Kielce pogrom:

A theory about a provocation by the authorities [...] cannot serve as a shield protecting criminal behaviour of ordinary people on an ordinary day in an ordinary town. The experience teaches that by exposing only one side of the Kielce tragedy, giving in to the defensive reactions, often subconsciously, [...] one does deform the reality. This concerns especially the questions about

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<sup>26</sup> For an outline of this debate see: H. Kwiatkowska, ‘When it was an ordinary thing to kill a Jew: the debate in Polish mainstream media about the Kielce pogrom and J.T. Gross’s new book *Fear*’, *EEJA*, 37/1 (April 2007), pp. 119-122.

<sup>27</sup> J. R. Nowak, ‘Przeciw fałszowaniu historii (1)’, *Nasz Dziennik*, 170: 22-23 July 2006, pp. 20-21; ‘Przeciw fałszowaniu historii (1)’, *Nasz Dziennik*, 171: 24 July 2006, pp. 12-13.

<sup>28</sup> S. Bratkowski, ‘Uraz’, *Rzeczpospolita*, 152: 1-2 July 2006, p. 12.

<sup>29</sup> M. J. Chodakiewicz is a Professor of History at the Institute of World Politics in Washington and sits at the US Holocaust Memorial Council (nominated by G.W. Bush). These words appeared in his article ‘Historia jako wycinanka’, *Rzeczpospolita*, 269: 18-19 Nov. 2006, p. 12.

<sup>30</sup> A. Kaczyński, ‘Pogrom na Plantach’, *Rzeczpospolita*, 152: 1-2 July 2006, p. 12.



inspiration and organization behind the pogrom and the theory that it was a deliberate provocation.<sup>31</sup>

*Nasz Dziennik*'s treatment of the Kielce pogrom transgressed the 'defensive reaction'; the newspaper used the topic to attack Jews. As for the issue of a provocation, B. Szaynok noted that while the authorities, militia, UB, army – had 'their role in the escalation of aggression, feeding the flame of anger does not necessarily mean provocation'.<sup>32</sup> In its articles on the Holocaust *Nasz Dziennik* does not write about Jewish suffering; similarly here the Jewish victims of Kielce do not deserve empathy.

However, even more important is the newspaper's omission of the hatred and prejudice that allowed ordinary people to justify their repulsive actions. In Szaynok's<sup>33</sup> and J. Daniel's<sup>34</sup> reconstructions of the events in Kielce we read that adults with their colloquial saying 'the Jews caught you' might have suggested to young Henryk Błaszczyk what had happened to him when he went missing for two days. Other adults, when they heard that the Jews caught a little boy, acted on this rumour because it confirmed what they were used to hearing about Jews. If such negative images function in the common language and ordinary people's minds, the outbreak of aggression and violence is only a matter of circumstances and time. *Nasz Dziennik* fails to see the lasting and damaging effects of hate speech, not surprising considering the fact that demonizing of various groups, including Jews, forms such an integral part of its writings.

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<sup>31</sup> K. Kersten, Introduction to: B. Szaynok, *Pogrom Żydów w Kielcach 4 lipca 1946*, (Warsaw, 1992), p. 7.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid., p.32

<sup>34</sup> J. Daniel, *Żyd w zielonym kapeluszu. Rzecz o kieleckim pogromie 4 lipca 1946*, (Kielce, 1996), p.102.



## Chapter VII

**‘Crimes committed against Poles’** and ‘Żydokomuna’ – attempts to find ‘Jewish neighbours’ in order to outbalance the Jedwabne controversy.

In this work I often refer to parallel perceptions of Polish-Jewish relations. Polish and Jewish collective memories often part and enter separate tracks when confronting such painful historical events as the Holocaust, the Kielce pogrom or the Jedwabne massacre. Alleged culpability of Jews for imposing a Communist regime on the Poles, supported by disproportionate Jewish participation in the Soviet-imposed political structures and coercion apparatus, is often summed up by the Polish hybrid word ‘Żydokomuna’ [Judeo-communism]. The term, first used in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century, precedes the establishment of the Communist regime in Poland.<sup>1</sup> In other words, the foundations for the myth have been laid long before the events that are cited to prove it actually happened. The myth was strengthened ‘in the wake of the 1905 Revolution [when] the Jews became a powerful personification of the mysterious “enemy from within”, conspiring to deprive the Poles of their self-rule. Striving to turn Poland into a Judeo-Polonia. It is no wonder that such a myth was subsequently activated during every political crisis or electoral competition.’<sup>2</sup> The myth of ‘Żydokomuna’ was strengthened further in interwar Poland by the rhetoric that interwove it with contemporary events, especially the Polish-Soviet war of 1920.<sup>3</sup>

Some scholars view ‘Żydokomuna’ as an ‘accentuation of the myth of a “Jewish world conspiracy”’.<sup>4</sup> Just as with other Polish-Jewish themes, ‘Żydokomuna’ has been long dismissed as myth by established ethnic Polish, Polish-Jewish and international academics, but the myth is well alive among the public and nationalistic circles. The arguments and data challenging the ‘Żydokomuna’ myth have not reached the public consciousness.

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<sup>1</sup> First used by writer Julian Ursyn Niemcewicz in 1817 in his dystopia entitled *The Year 3333*, describing a town run by Jews.

<sup>2</sup> J. Jedlicki, ‘Resisting the Wave: Intellectuals against Antisemitism in the Last Years of the “Polish Kingdom”’, in: R. Blobaum (ed.), *Antisemitism and...*, p. 61.

<sup>3</sup> J. Michlic, *Poland’s Threatening Other: the Image of the Jew from 1880 to the Present*, (Lincoln and London, 2006), p. 88. Compare also with the similar use of Jewish-Bolshevik motif in the Nazi propaganda in: J. Herf, *The Jewish Enemy: Nazi Propaganda during World War II and the Holocaust*, (Cambridge, Mass., 2006)

<sup>4</sup> A. Gerrits, ‘Antisemitism and Anti-Communism: the Myth of “Judeo-Communism” in Eastern Europe’, *EEJA*, 25/1 (Summer 1995), pp. 49-72.



On the margin of serious research on 'Żydokomuna' we have those, emphasising the religious perspective of Jewish identity, who strongly deny, not the dominance of Jews in the Communist movement, but the very fact that those individuals can be considered Jewish. The argument being that those who left Judaism – the religious faith – in favour of communism ceased being Jewish.<sup>5</sup> In my view this is a very naïve approach, disregarding ethnicity as an equally important foundation of Jewish identity as religious affiliation. Ironically, the same paradigm is used in *Nasz Dziennik* and the right-wing press to disaffiliate Poles from any involvement in the enforcement of the Communist regime; the real Pole is a Catholic, the one who chooses to serve the communist ideology, which is hostile to any religion, ceases to be a Pole. Such an approach is extremely convenient for those who wish to whitewash the history of their own ethnic/religious group.

The other matter is the self-perception of those Jewish Communists concerned; to what extent did they feel Polish rather than Jewish? This is an extremely complex issue as their identity was forcefully altered during the early 1950s and 1968 anti-Jewish campaigns. Those who did not consider themselves Jewish had this identity thrown back at them, often to the great shock of the individual who felt Polish and even more to the consternation of his/her children who lived unaware of their Jewish lineage. As for the 'Żydokomuna' myth, it appears that its proponents set down the criteria who is Jewish, as well as who is not Polish. However, even with these criteria, of extending the term Jewish to those who did not feel this label described them well, in order to boast the numbers of Jewish Communists, the 'Żydokomuna' myth depends on questionable preconceptions. To complicate the matter even further, it was common for Polish Gentiles in high echelons of power, such as Bolesław Bierut or Stanisław Radkiewicz, to be perceived as Jews.

The core of the 'Żydokomuna' myth stems from the conviction that there is an almost 'organic' link between the Jews and radical ideas. Some scholars explored this idea on a more critical level and sought an explanation in the religious background or even psychological factors, such as self-hatred that may have led some Jews to

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<sup>5</sup> Strictly speaking in religious terms some of the Polish prominent 'Jewish' Communists were not Jewish according to the religious law in the first place so for the sake of accuracy should be called of 'Jewish origin'. See: A. Grabski, *Działalność komunistów wśród Żydów w Polsce (1944-1949)*, (Warsaw, 2004), p. 31.



support the communist ideology.<sup>6</sup> Unlike the proponents of the myth, those scholars do not apply their theories to the whole of the Jewish population, rather to a fraction. Moreover, their theories do not give an exhaustive answer to the question why some Jews were attracted to communism. Some claim that Jews are ‘naturally’ attracted to ideas promoting modernity and social mobility, and at the time communism was the big, modern idea.<sup>7</sup> One of the external factors pushing Jews towards communism might have been antisemitism.<sup>8</sup> Paradoxically, those who support ‘Żydokomuna’ myth are also the active proponents of the nationalistic ideology that might have been an important factor in making communism so attractive to some Jews. However, we should always remember that there are no short-cuts when trying to answer why Jews were attracted to communism. J. Schatz when analyzing this issue sees Polish-Jewish Communists as a distinctive social generation shaped by demography, identity and action.<sup>9</sup>

Another pillar of the ‘Żydokomuna’ myth is the assumption that without the Jews the enforcement of the Communist regime would have been impossible. The over-representation of Jews in the security apparatus is seen as the strongest argument in support of this conclusion. Scholars who challenge the myth do not deny the over-representation of Jews in the security apparatus. Many scholars refer to a note written by B. Bierut<sup>10</sup> in 1945 estimating that the UB [Security Office] was made up of 1.7% Jews while higher management posts were occupied by 13% of Jews.<sup>11</sup> Although the exact data is difficult to establish, the over-representation at the higher management is accepted.<sup>12</sup> This, however, had been seen by the Communists as a problem from the onset, and the Jews were forced to disguise their identity.

Another question we need to ask is whether Jewish Communists were over-represented within the Jewish-Polish population in Poland after the war. The answer is a bit complicated largely due to the emigration of those Jews who distanced themselves from the communist ideology. As Schatz estimated that in 1947 about 2%

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<sup>6</sup> For a comprehensive survey of various researches see: J. Schatz, ‘The Riddle of Radical Jews’ in *The Generation. The Rise and Fall of the Jewish Communists of Poland*, (Berkeley and Oxford, 1991), pp. 11-19.

<sup>7</sup> Compare Y. Slezkine, *The Jewish Century*, (Princeton, 2004).

<sup>8</sup> J. Schatz, *The Generation...*, pp. 11-19.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 20.

<sup>10</sup> Bolesław Bierut in 1947-1952 president of Poland, in 1954-56 PM.

<sup>11</sup> K. Kersten, *Polacy, Żydzi, Komunizm – anatomia półprawd 1939-68*, (Warsaw, 1992), pp. 76-88.

<sup>12</sup> On the data problem in this field see: A. Paczkowski, ‘Jews in the Polish Security Apparatus: An Attempt to Test the Stereotype’, *Polin*, 16 (2003), pp. 453-467.



of the Jewish-Polish population was involved in the Communist movement, this number rose to 14% in 1949, mainly due to the emigration.<sup>13</sup> In other words, the number of Jewish Communists remained stable, however the emigration of those Jews who opposed the regime affected the ratio between the Jews-Communists and Jews who were not involved in the apparatus. Schatz's research challenges the myth that 'all Jews were Communists after the war'. Further, the argument about alleged Jewish control of the security apparatus only applies until 1968 when Jews fell victim to the nationalistic faction within the Communist party as well as to the antisemitic campaign carried out in the Soviet block under the banner of anti-Zionism. The enforcement of the regime after 1968 by the ethnic-Polish Communists is one of the serious challenges to the 'Żydokomuna' myth. Not only did the regime survive well without Jews in the security apparatus, but the ethnic Poles were as capable of torturing their co-patriots as were the Jews.

Also, crucial to the 'Żydokomuna' myth is the denial that Jews including Jewish Communists suffered under the regime<sup>14</sup> and that their position was even more vulnerable than that of ethnic-Poles, even when at times some individuals enjoyed affluent positions within the system. Even before the purges Jews were eliminated as Jews in terms of their distinct identity, they were forced to change surnames or keep those used in hiding on the Aryan side, often only those with 'good looks' were promoted. Later, as the new regime reached stabilization and with the widening of its support, Jews were fully eliminated, forced to leave Poland.<sup>15</sup>

In *Nasz Dziennik* the 'Żydokomuna' myth was reinforced with clearly written down roles, Jews were the collaborators, Poles were the victims who suffered to save the world; 'Jews, on a great scale, took part in the crimes of the Bolshevik terror' while 'Poland stopped the world [Bolshevik] revolution'.<sup>16</sup> *Nasz Dziennik* consequently constructs the image of the Jew-collaborator, ready to betray at the first given opportunity. This image was supported by stories about Jews welcoming the Red Army in 1920 as well as in 1939.<sup>17</sup> The image of the Jew-enemy within was a

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<sup>13</sup> J. Schatz, 'O micie "Żydokomuny"', in M. Bilewicz, B. Pawisz (eds.), 'Żydzi i Komunizm', *Jidele – Żydowskie Pismo Otwarte*, (Spring 2000), pp. 64-70.

<sup>14</sup> About 100,000 Jews fell victim to Soviet deportations during World War II, see: J. Schatz, *The Generation*, p. 151.

<sup>15</sup> A. Smolar, 'Tabu i nienawiść' in M. Bilewicz, B. Pawisz (eds.), 'Żydzi i Komunizm', *Jidele*, (Spring 2000), pp. 52-62, the text was first published in London: *Aneks*: 41-42, (1986), pp. 89-133.

<sup>16</sup> I. C. Pogonowski, 'Polska powstrzymała rewolucję światową', *Nasz Dziennik*, 188: 13 Aug. 2003, p.10.

<sup>17</sup> A. Kulesza, 'Szli niszcząc, rabując i mordując', *Nasz Dziennik*, 190: 14-15 Aug. 2004, p. 21.



clear response to the image of the Jew-ordinary neighbour, that was presented in the J. T. Gross's book *Neighbors* on the Jedwabne massacre. As mentioned in the chapter IV: Jedwabne, Jewish victims of the massacre were presented as Soviet collaborators. The articles portraying Jews as enemies in general reinforce that message.

In yet another series of articles, the prolific author, Prof. Jerzy Robert Nowak, accused the 'Bolshevised Jews' of numerous crimes committed against Poles. The motto of this series, continually repeated in his essays, were the words of Father Józef M. Bocheński published in *Kultura* (No. 7-8, 1986): 'As it is known the power was largely in their hands after the Soviets occupied Poland, in particular some Jews controlled the security. This power and this police are responsible for the murder of many among the best of Poles. **In my opinion Poles have a much greater right to speak about the pogrom of Poles by Jews than Jews about Polish pogroms**' [bold by J. R.N.].<sup>18</sup>

In the first article of the series Nowak wrote about the issues linked to the Soviet occupation of Poland. He quoted Jan Karski, Norman Davies and Marek Wierzbicki to support his account of 'murderous' denunciation of the Bolshevised Jews on Poles. Further, the author wrote 'about the unusually sadistic behaviour of young Jewish militiamen during the deportations, and their participation in looting of the Polish property'. He talked about Jews manifesting their happiness at the fall of Poland and of cases of extremely hurtful behaviour to Polish religious feelings such as destroying little chapels at crossroads. Finally, Nowak listed individual as well as mass murder cases: 'such as murders on the Lviv student activists, murder by the Jewish NKVD of the Dominican monks in Czortków, murder of policemen in Kołki and Sarny, the massacre of the Polish prisoners in Tarnopol committed by the Jews'.<sup>19</sup> These and many other cases the author presented in an 'over 1000-pages monograph' on which he was working at the time. The book was supposed to concentrate on 'murderous deeds of the Bolshevised Jews in the Kresy'<sup>20</sup>.

The second part of the series was devoted to the massacres in Naliboki and Koniuchy. In Naliboki in the Nowogród region 'on 8 May 1943 at dawn 128 Polish residents of this little town were murdered by the Jewish commanders: Tuwia Bielski

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<sup>18</sup> 'Przemilczane zbrodnie na Polakach (1)', *Nasz Dziennik*, 257: 4 Nov. 2002, pp. 4-5.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid.

<sup>20</sup> Eastern outskirts of Poland before World War II.



and Szolem Zorin.’<sup>21</sup> Nowak quoted descriptions of this event by an eyewitness and added ‘among the people so cruelly murdering the Polish residents of Naliboki were also their Jewish “neighbours” (to use the favourite word of J.T. Gross)’.<sup>22</sup>

The author mentioned the IPN report on the Naliboki case published on the Institute’s Internet portal on 5 September 2002 and an article by Jacek Hugon Bander that was published in *Gazeta Wyborcza*<sup>23</sup> as early as 1996. Thus, Nowak actually contradicted himself; the cases he discussed are not silenced or forgotten, just viewed differently from his Jew-blaming approach.

Writing about the massacre in the Koniuchy village on 29 January 1944 Nowak referred to the memoirs of the ‘murderous Jewish partisans’, bandits, who ‘boasted of their achievements’. The author shockingly added: ‘It is very telling that those responsible for the Koniuchy bloodbath justified this massacre of the whole village because it was “reactionary”. So let us remember that among those murdered “reactionaries” was one and a half year old N. Molisówna’.<sup>24</sup>

The regular readers of *Nasz Dziennik* know very well the murder cases of Koniuchy and Naliboki because the authors often refer to these crimes when writing about the Jedwabne murder case. It is as if the Polish dark patch of history was somehow erased by another dark patch – here attributed to the Jews. Though Koniuchy and Naliboki are known to the reader still *Nasz Dziennik* insists that those crimes are surrounded by silence. While some regular authors see in this silence a deliberate conspiracy, historian Leszek Żebrowski has a less mysterious explanation. According to him these massacres are surrounded by silence because there are no publications in English written about the crimes by the Polish side.<sup>25</sup> In an interview given to *Nasz Dziennik* Żebrowski repeated many details recounted by Nowak. In addition, he spoke about the harem of the Jewish commander Tuwia Bielski and about the wealth of the Jewish partisans.<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> ‘Przemilczane zbrodnie na Polakach (2)’, *Nasz Dziennik*, 268: 18 Nov. 2002, pp. 4-5.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid.

<sup>23</sup> J. Hugo-Bader, ‘A rewolucja to przecież miała być przyjemność’, *Duży Format*, 45, pp. 6-11: in *Gazeta Wyborcza*, 266: 15 Nov. 1996.

<sup>24</sup> ‘Przemilczane zbrodnie na Polakach (2)’, *Nasz Dziennik*, 268: 18 Nov. 2002, pp. 4-5.

<sup>25</sup> M. Rotulska, ‘Historia znana i nieznana...’, *Nasz Dziennik*, 54: 5 Mar. 2001, pp. 4-5.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid. Compare: N. Tec, *Defiance: The Bielski Partisans*, (Oxford and New York, 1993) where she writes how Bileski Partisans protected the largest family camp of Jews who escaped from the ghettos. Tec’s book relies predominantly on the accounts told by the camp members and their relatives. It refers to cases when the partisans took revenge on villagers who betrayed them by showing the whereabouts of the hiding group. However, those accounts are not very specific. In contrast to *Nasz Dziennik*, Tec discusses constant lack of security experienced by the partisans and the threats from the Soviet



The crimes committed in Koniuchy and Naliboki were only ‘satellite topics’ of the Jedwabne controversy. Hence, when the debate about Jedwabne reached past the most heated stage, *Nasz Dziennik* also stopped devoting so much space to the topics that were supposed to balance out Jedwabne. References to Koniuchy and Naliboki still appeared in articles after 2002, however articles solely devoted to those massacres were rare. Nevertheless, after the intense campaign to publicise these crimes during the Jedwabne controversy, Koniuchy and Naliboki started functioning as word-codes, symbols of Jewish savagery and refusal to repent for ‘their’ atrocities. On those few occasions after 2002 when *Nasz Dziennik* devoted whole articles to those crimes, the main recurring theme was that ‘Jewish perpetrators of these crimes boast about them [szczyć się]’ and that unlike Jedwabne these crimes are ignored by the media.<sup>27</sup> Another reminder about the Koniuchy murder appeared as *Nasz Dziennik* was addressing the Jedwabne massacre anniversary. Although historian L. Żebrowski referred to ‘new evidence about Koniuchy’, he merely recited old themes about revengeful Jews boasting about the crime and about deliberate silence surrounding Koniuchy. Interestingly, he specified two occupiers of Poland during World War II as ‘Germans and Soviet-Jewish partisans’.<sup>28</sup>

The chief crime committed against Poles by Jews, according to Nowak, was that of ‘Jewish Communists [participating] in the Stalinisation of Poland’.<sup>29</sup> Many times Nowak has written about ‘the dominance of the Jewish Communists in the UB [Security Office]’. He also highlighted that ‘probably there was no such shameful crime [committed] against the Polish heroes, most noble of Polish patriots in the era of Stalinism in Poland, around which the shadows of Jewish executioners were hidden’.<sup>30</sup> The author used out-of-context quotations from Maria Dąbrowska, Stefan Kisielewski and Czesław Miłosz in order to show how Jews loved communism, how they played a key role in the Stalinist apparatus. In Nowak’s own words ‘how with the hands covered in blood up to their elbows Jews slowly tightened nooses on the necks

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partisans, which led Bileski to renounce his leadership. The author does not shy away from the questions about sexual liaisons in the camp, the topic much exaggerated in *Nasz Dziennik*. Michael Berkowitz also researched the topic of Jewish partisans and explored how the Jewish criminality propaganda spread by Nazis was used to their advantage. Peasants fearing ‘cruel Jewish bandits’ and their retribution might have been more reluctant to oppose food confiscations or less eager to denounce them to the Nazis see: M. Berkowitz, ‘The Nazi equation of Jewish partisans with “bandits” and its consequences’, *European Review of History*, 13/2 (June 2006), pp. 311-333.

<sup>27</sup> H. Sokolska, ‘Niechciana rocznica’, *Nasz Dziennik*, 22: 27 Jan. 2004, pp. 7-10.

<sup>28</sup> L. Żebrowski, ‘Nowe dowody popełnionej zbrodni’, *Nasz Dziennik*, 135: 11 June 2004, p. 14.

<sup>29</sup> ‘Przemilczane zbrodnie na Polakach (3)’, *Nasz Dziennik*, 274: 25 Nov. 2002, pp. 4-5.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid.



of nations'. For Nowak and *Nasz Dziennik* in general the great Jew-criminal par excellence is Salomon Morel, commandant of the Świętochłowice camp in 1945, accused of being responsible for the death of about 1600 prisoners.<sup>31</sup>

*Nasz Dziennik* has been writing about S. Morel since 1998 in connection with Israel's refusal to extradite him to Poland.<sup>32</sup> Also, whenever *Nasz Dziennik* mentions this unresolved case it is outraged at the fact that Morel continues to take up 5000 Polish złoty a month of his Polish pension. The fact that Morel has not been tried for committing a genocide on Polish Silesians and political prisoners<sup>33</sup> to *Nasz Dziennik* was evidence of 'UB's old agreements'<sup>34</sup> still overruling law and justice in free Poland.

Responding to those who claim that Jews in the Stalinist apparatus cut all the ties with their Jewishness and Judaism, and thus should no longer be described as Jews, Nowak retorted that 'it is a favourite method to negate the Jewish responsibility for the crimes of Stalinism'.<sup>35</sup> He also maintained that those Jews so fiercely fought Poles precisely because of their 'Jewish chauvinism'.<sup>36</sup>

One of the articles in Nowak's series introduced the 'main traitors [targowiczenie] of Jewish origin' beginning with Jakub Berman and ending with Stefan Michnik. Among many other names those two are favourite 'Jewish-criminals' of *Nasz Dziennik*. Stefan Michnik, the older brother of Adam Michnik, hated chief editor of *Gazeta Wyborcza*, is especially fiercely attacked in *Nasz Dziennik*. Nowak also wrote extensively about the trial of the legendary underground general August Emil Fieldorf. The photograph of the general was printed with a caption: 'Murdered

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<sup>31</sup> The camp in Świętochłowice, initially established as a sub-camp of Auschwitz (Eintrachthutte), after the war became a place of isolation mainly for Germans and Volksdeutsches from the territory of the Upper Silesia. Native Silesians were treated as traitors though during the Nazi occupation they were automatically considered as of German origin. This was recognised at the end of 1945 as a group victimisation carried out without sufficient proofs of open collaboration by individuals with the Nazis. However, after the camp was closed down the Silesians were never fully rehabilitated. The Świętochłowice camp existed from Feb. to Nov. 1945, 6,000 prisoners went through it and about 1,600 died from bad sanitary conditions, typhoid epidemic and torture. From Feb. 1945 Salomon Morel was co-managing the camp and from June 1945 he became its sole commander. Morel survived the war in hiding and as a member of a Soviet partisan group. The IPN dismissed the claims that he was once an inmate of Auschwitz. Morel was reported as cruel and deliberately negligent about the health conditions in the camp. See also: A. Dziurok, *Obóz Pracy w Świętochłowicach w 1945*, (Warsaw, 2002).

<sup>32</sup> See: 'Zbrodniarz z emeryturą', *Nasz Dziennik*, 264: 9 Dec. 1998, p.1; M. Zienkiewicz, 'Mściciel czy morderca?', *Nasz Dziennik*, 269: 15 Dec. 1998, pp. 8-9.

<sup>33</sup> R. Motoła, 'Zarzut: ludobójstwo', *Nasz Dziennik*, 296: 20-21 Dec. 2003, pp. 1, 12.

<sup>34</sup> R. Motoła, 'Sprawę ekstradycji Salomona Morela komentuje prof. Mirosław Piotrowski', *Nasz Dziennik*, 58: 9 Mar. 2004, p. 12.

<sup>35</sup> 'Przemilczane zbrodnie na Polakach (3)', *Nasz Dziennik*, 274: 25 Nov. 2002, p. 5.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid.



by Jewish Communists'.<sup>37</sup> Helena Wolińska, prosecutor in Fieldorf's case, is another of the favourite 'Jewish criminals' of Nowak. He even devoted a whole article to this 'monster in uniform.'<sup>38</sup> Nowak recalled that Wolińska's real name was Fajga Midlak Danielak. This was important to the author as in her Jewish extraction he saw a key to finding the explanation of why she carried out 'murders sanctioned by a trial' of those who were the 'pride of Poland'. *Nasz Dziennik* is very interested in Helena Wolińska's case as the Polish authorities asked Britain to extradite her in order to be tried in Poland. The newspaper has been reporting on the developments of this case. It was outraged at Wolińska's refusal to face justice in democratic Poland as she claimed that as a Jew she would not get a fair trial.<sup>39</sup>

In June 2005 *Nasz Dziennik* started publishing a new series based on Nowak's book<sup>40</sup> entitled 'Red biographies' in which yet again he reminds of 'Communist lineage' of prominent Jewish intellectuals: Adam Michnik, Konstanty Gebert, Stanisław Krajewski and left-wing politician Marek Borowski. In December 2006 Nowak wrote about Jewish journalists who (allegedly) collaborated with the security apparatus.<sup>41</sup> These articles do not reveal new facts and can be seen as a mutation of the series published three years earlier.

For *Nasz Dziennik* in general and for Prof. Nowak in particular there is only one role that the Jews played during the Soviet occupation and the Stalinization of Poland – namely that of cruel persecutors. Nowak made general statements but did not show any in-depth analysis to confirm his claims. Likewise he did not refer fairly to scholarly works, which research the degree of Jewish involvement in the coercion apparatus. Whenever he actually mentioned scholars tackling the 'Żydokomuna' myth, he did so merely to manipulate their words. For example Gross's arguments about the complexity and misrepresentation of Jewish attitudes towards the Soviets were disregarded by Nowak. His whole research was reduced to the statement that Gross confirmed that Jews were kissing Soviet tanks in September 1939. Nowak's attitude towards Gross was summarised in the words: 'Anti-Polish actions of Bolshevised Jews, [are] so falsified, and even beatified, also in the last years by

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<sup>37</sup> 'Przemilczane zbrodnie na Polakach (4)', *Nasz Dziennik*, 280: 2 Dec. 2002, p. 12.

<sup>38</sup> 'Przemilczane zbrodnie na Polakach (5)', *Nasz Dziennik*, 292: 16 Dec. 2002, p. 10.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid.

<sup>40</sup> J. R. Nowak, *Czerwone dynastie*, (Warsaw, 2004).

<sup>41</sup> J. R. Nowak, 'Dziennikarze i bezpieczeństwo', *Nasz Dziennik*, 296: 20 Dec. 2006, pp. 10-11.



vulgar frauds of history in the style of Jan Tomasz Gross'.<sup>42</sup> Nowak also delighted in quoting N. Davies writing in the *New York Review of Books* of 9 April 1987 'among collaborators, who came to help soviet powers [...] Jews were disproportionately represented'.<sup>43</sup>

In addition, Nowak does not show what percentage of the Jewish partisan activity those crimes in Koniuchy and Naliboki account for. Nor does he pay much attention to who exactly formed these partisan groups. If he did he might have found answers why Jews who escaped ghettos and Nazi deportations, preferred the Communist underground groups to the ones Nowak would call patriotic ones, but in which Jews had to hide their identity or risked being betrayed because of it.

More generally, once Nowak referred to a statement taken out of context from an interview by Ruta Pragier with a Polish-Jewish Communist. However, he chose not to mention statements, which explained that Jews before the war chose communism because of poverty and persecution. While after the war they continued supporting the regime because thanks to the Soviets they survived. After they made such a choice it was too late to turn back under the circumstances of the Communist regime.<sup>44</sup> Besides Nowak creates an impression that in the UB there were only Jews, as if no (ethnic) Poles were working in the security apparatus of the Communist regime and that, even further, without the Jews there would be no communism in Poland.

To sum up, the series of articles on the 'crimes committed against Poles' was meant to outweigh the Jedwabne case. Nowak's accounts of the Koniuchy and Naliboki massacres referred to the 'Jewish neighbours' a clear attempt to mirror Gross and his book. The only difference is that the perpetrators are Jewish. In addition, those neighbours did not stop with a few haphazard massacres during the chaos of the war, under the Communist regime they are portrayed murdering Poles methodically. Although *Nasz Dziennik* denies strongly Polish initiative and willing participation in the Jedwabne massacre, nevertheless it feels that some Polish guilt needs to be addressed. Its way to whitewash Polish guilt is by exposing the Jewish culpability. Koniuchy and Naliboki outweigh Jedwabne. Now the scores are equal but Nowak did not stop at this result. By ascribing all the Stalinist crimes to Jews he put the overwhelming weight of guilt on the Jewish side. The 'scales' clearly show that

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<sup>42</sup> J. R. Nowak, 'Antypolskie wystąpienia na Kresach (1939-1941)', *Nasz Dziennik*, 217: 17 Sep. 2003, pp. 10-11.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid.

<sup>44</sup> R. Pragier, *Żydzi czy Polacy*, (Warsaw, 1992), pp. 79, 80, 94.



Jedwabne does not compare to all the Jewish crimes committed on Poles. The ‘right’ images are restored: good Pole-victim and hero versus Jew-persecutor. The whole series is like an act of exorcism that is supposed to purify the injured Polish pride of the haunting ghost of Jedwabne.



## Chapter VIII

### ‘Anti-Polonism’

*Nasz Dziennik* wants to open the eyes of its readers to the damaging campaign against Poland and the Poles. This negative campaign is allegedly planned and carried out by the Jews, especially American Jews.<sup>1</sup> As proof that such a campaign exists *Nasz Dziennik* points to the Jedwabne case and the international media frenzy that surrounded it. On numerous occasions the newspaper explains that the media coverage of the Jedwabne murder is an international witch-hunt against the Poles in order to force them to pay heavy damages. Waldemar Maszewski was outraged when ‘the Jewish publicist Dawid Warszawski<sup>2</sup> libels Poles’<sup>3</sup> in an interview given to the German newspaper *Die Welt*. According to *Nasz Dziennik* Warszawski ‘stubbornly repeated Gross’s lies’, and interpreted Polish passivity in Jedwabne as helping in the massacre. Above all he claimed that ‘Jedwabne should become a collective reflection of the Polish identity and it should be compulsorily taught at schools.’ Such views were seen by Maszewski as having only one aim – to ‘belittle the Poles in the eyes of the world’s public opinion and to whitewash [the image of] the Germans from the guilt of] the crimes they committed.’<sup>4</sup> It should be pointed out that *Nasz Dziennik*’s journalist treated a Jew as not entitled to his Polish identity. Warszawski was treated as a stranger and his critical views have been dismissed as ‘permanent libelling’.

Reporting from Belgium Krzysztof Skotnicki saw the Jedwabne case as a cause for an avalanche of articles in the foreign press ‘humiliating Poland’.<sup>5</sup> The author showed a whole collection of quotations coming from the international press, mainly French, English, American and Australian, that show Poles through a lens tinted by the Jedwabne massacre. According to Skotnicki, ‘Western journalists do not say that the phrase “Polish concentration camps” is only a printing mistake. They openly state that Poles are a criminal nation guilty of the holocaust.’<sup>6</sup> Finally, the author disclosed the Jewish blackmail that allegedly was issued on 19 April 1996 by the secretary general of the World Jewish Congress I. Singer and was reported by

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<sup>1</sup> M. Dylewski, ‘Amerykański antypolonizm’, *Nasz Dziennik*, 297: 21 Dec. 1999, pp. 12-13.

<sup>2</sup> Pen name of Konstanty Gebert, journalist writing for *Gazeta Wyborcza* and publisher of *Midrasz*.

<sup>3</sup> W. Maszewski, ‘Warszawski szkaluje Polaków’, *Nasz Dziennik*, 166: 18 July 2002, p. 3.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

<sup>5</sup> K. Skotnicki, ‘Upokorzyć Polskę’, *Nasz Dziennik*, 85: 20 Apr. 2001, p. 10.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.



Reuters. Singer allegedly warned that: 'Unless Poland fulfils the Jewish demands, she will be put on the international spot. Poland will be publicly attacked and humiliated in front of the whole world'. In light of this statement Skotnicki asked the reader whether: 'The Polish Nation can afford to remain passive in the face of the fulfilment of these plans?' How the nation should react to this is left to the reader to decide.

Often *Nasz Dziennik* morally equates antisemitism with anti-Polonism. However, the newspaper's rhetoric on this issue is characteristically contradictory. Sometimes *Nasz Dziennik* views antisemitism as no different from any other form of xenophobia, consequently acknowledging that such a phenomenon exists. Whenever *Nasz Dziennik* admits the existence of antisemitism, apparently it is outnumbered by the cases of anti-Polonism. More often the newspaper treats antisemitism as imagined by the Jews, yet shrewdly used by them to manipulate others. *Nasz Dziennik*'s outlook on antisemitism can be summed up by the words: 'An antisemite is not someone who does not like Jews, it is someone whom Jews do not like.'<sup>7</sup>

According to Helena Pasierbska, anti-Polonism is not a new phenomenon. In the Vilna region, where she grew up, 'there was no antisemitism' among the young generation. On the other hand, anti-Polonism did exist, because: 'The Jewish community was not loyal to the Polish state. Jews made up the core of the Polish Communist Party and carried out revolutionary actions, thus opposing our Nation.'<sup>8</sup> To support this view the author recounted examples of Jews welcoming the occupying Red Army. Specifically, she recalled an event which she witnessed; a young Jew hitting a Polish soldier in the face just after the September 1939 defeat. In addition, the author quoted in support, without a specific reference, Norman Davies, as stating: '...there was an irrational hatred of the Poles by a part of the Jews'. Pasierbska clarified that it was a 'significant part' of the Jews. Further, she was outraged that 'despite six thousand trees planted in Israel for the Poles, who were saving Jewish lives, not counting how many lost theirs in the process, Jews dare to talk about "open acts of aggression [towards them] by the Home Army".'<sup>9</sup> Finally, the author listed the crimes of Lithuanians committed on Jews and Poles. The fact that these crimes are not publicised she ascribed to anti-Polonism. Hence not even the Germans but only the Poles are made to feel guilty. The article is yet another example of erasing one

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<sup>7</sup> S. Karczewski, 'Faryzeusze i uczeni w piśmie', *Nasz Dziennik*, 42: 19 Feb. 2004, p. 16.

<sup>8</sup> H. Pasierbska, 'Antysemityzm czy antypolonizm?', *Nasz Dziennik*, 144: 22 June 2001, p. 10.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid.



nation's guilt by making the other appear even more guilty. In this case, next to the Jews, Lithuanians appear as guilty.

According to the authors of *Nasz Dziennik*, anti-Polonism appears foremost in history publications and even school textbooks. One example of the latter is a book by Andrzej Żbikowski, *Żydzi. Antysemityzm. Holokaust*.<sup>10</sup> This is an extra-curricular book aimed at high-school youth and as an aid for history teachers. It provides an outline of Jewish history in Poland, supported by many photographs. The book is very accessible to a young reader, but at the same time does not avoid difficult topics such as antisemitism in Poland. The author, Dr Andrzej Żbikowski, is a renowned scholar and researcher at the Jewish Historical Institute in Warsaw.<sup>11</sup> The book was reviewed in *Nasz Dziennik* by Dr Andrzej Leszek Szcześniak, always keen to spot anti-Polonism. He accused Żbikowski of blaming the Poles for participating in the Holocaust in order to force a 'ransom for the international hyenas of the Shoah-business.'<sup>12</sup> Also, Szcześniak in response to the book proposed his definition of antisemitism as 'a term used when one wants to explain the genesis of the Holocaust [Zagłada] and also when someone dares to criticise a person of Jewish origin for committing some improper deed. It is used in discussions when one runs out of constructive arguments.' Szcześniak also pointed out that the book omits difficult topics like the plans to create 'Judeopolonia',<sup>13</sup> the attitude of Jews towards the Soviet occupant, 'differentiating of the human suffering', Jewish collaboration with the Nazis and indifference of the international Jewry in the face of the Holocaust. The reviewer finally passed the verdict; the book because of 'its bias and as being a part of Shoah-business, will cause hatred.'<sup>14</sup>

The same tone prevails in another article by the same author. He disclosed an 'anti-Polish offensive' carried out by the Polish-Israeli textbooks committee.<sup>15</sup> The main accusation against the committee is that 'the Israeli side is represented by the Jews from Israel and the Polish side by...the Polish Jews.' Also, the committee

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<sup>10</sup> A. Żbikowskiego, *Żydzi. Antysemityzm. Holokaust*, (Wrocław, 2001).

<sup>11</sup> He is also a contributor in the latest publication on Polish Jewry and the Holocaust aimed at the secondary school students: *Pamięć, Historia Żydów Polskich przed, w czasie i po Zagładzie*, (Warsaw, 2005).

<sup>12</sup> A. L. Szcześniak 'Antypolonizm dla młodzieży', *Nasz Dziennik*, 156: 6 July 2001, pp. 10-11.

<sup>13</sup> Compare: A. L. Szcześniak, *Judeopolonia. Żydowskie Państwo w Państwie Polskim*, (Radom, 2001).

<sup>14</sup> A. L. Szcześniak, 'Antypolonizm dla młodzieży', *Nasz Dziennik*, 156: 6 July 2001, pp. 10-11.

<sup>15</sup> A. L. Szcześniak, 'Dyktat', *Nasz Dziennik*, 129: 4 June 2001, p. 10-11; compare: J. Tomaszewski, 'Jewish themes in Polish school textbooks and popular history literature 1989-1994', *EEJA*, 24/2 (Winter 1994), pp. 89-101.



overuses the terms 'antisemitism' and 'pogroms', lacks balance of judgement which is reflected in recommendations that are damaging for Poland. Szcześniak accused the committee of falsifying history as in its works it does not mention any 'anti-Polish actions of the Jews.' Finally he summed up the works: 'Israeli youth will be taught zoological hatred towards Poland and the Poles; the same is not done towards the real perpetrators of the Jewish tragedies – the Germans. They have paid enough so now they are above any propaganda attacks. Now, only "the Nazis and the Poles" are left.'<sup>16</sup>

Anti-Polonism can be a passport to the elite circles, according to Zbigniew W. Fronczek who wrote about Jerzy Kosiński<sup>17</sup> and his semi-autobiographical novel *Malowany Ptak*. Kosiński was presented as an ungrateful 'anti-Pole [polakożerca]', who despite being saved by the Poles during the war, 'made a career out of presenting Poland as the country of antisemites.'<sup>18</sup> Both the novel and Kosiński as a person can be seen as controversial. However, the author of the article looks for sensation and some hidden reasons for which Kosiński wrote the novel. Fronczek reported: 'Before the novel was published in 1965, it has been rejected by twelve American publishers. After its publication our co-patriots from the Kongres Polonii Amerykańskiej suspected that the book, like other anti-Polish publications, was published with the help of German funds. It fitted perfectly in the series of publications proving that not the Germans but rather the Poles murdered the Jews.'<sup>19</sup>

Another great example of 'anti-Polonism' according to *Nasz Dziennik* is the comic book *Maus* by Art Spiegelman.<sup>20</sup> The book presents the Holocaust as a fight of the cats, the Germans, against the mice, the Jews, which is observed by the pigs, the Poles. Of course such illustrations offend Poles, as well as many Jews who saw in it a trivialisation of the Holocaust. *Nasz Dziennik* does not mention these Jewish objections in order to present the book as created exclusively to offend the Poles.<sup>21</sup>

The director Izabela Cywińska was accused of anti-Polonism because of her film *Cud Purymowy*. The film was interpreted as 'propaganda about the superiority of

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<sup>16</sup> A. L. Szcześniak, 'Dyktat', *Nasz Dziennik*, 129: 4 June 2001, pp. 10-11.

<sup>17</sup> J. Kosiński, *The Painted Bird*, first edition: Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company 1965, later revised in 1970. The book portrays a surreal journey of a Jewish boy during the Holocaust who in the Polish countryside faces hostility from the peasants.

<sup>18</sup> Z. W. Fronczek, 'Farbowany Ptak', *Nasz Dziennik*, 138: 15 June 2001, p.11.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid.

<sup>20</sup> Art Spiegelman first published parts of *Maus* in the magazine *Raw* between 1980-1991; A. Spiegelman, *The Complete Maus*, (Penguin Books, 2003).

<sup>21</sup> *Nasz Dziennik*, 98: 26 Apr. 2001.



the Israelite civilisation over “the drunken Pollacks”.’<sup>22</sup> Even the timing of the film screening on national television was seen as an anti-Polish manipulation, as it was shown just before an interview in which the poet Zbigniew Herbert criticised Adam Michnik. Allegedly the film was screened to weaken this criticism.

On numerous occasions in the articles on varied themes *Nasz Dziennik* accuses individuals, organisations and newspapers of spreading anti-Polonism. The most guilty of anti-Polonism are: *Gazeta Wyborcza* and its chief editor Adam Michnik, *Tygodnik Powszechny* (a weekly for Catholic intellectuals) and its editor Adam Boniecki, Kinga Dunin (a feminist writing for *Gazeta Wyborcza*), the priest Stanisław Musiał (Jesuit, Catholic-Jewish dialogue activist), Anda Rottenberg (director of Zachęta National Gallery who resigned after displaying a sculpture of pope John Paul II knocked down by a meteorite), and even poets Wisława Szymborska and Czesław Miłosz did not escape the accusations. In case of Miłosz *Nasz Dziennik* reached a pinnacle of bad taste, when it attacked the late Nobel Prize laureate while Poland was mourning his loss. *Nasz Dziennik* branded Miłosz an anti-Pole and refused him the right to be buried with state honours in Skalka. More recently *Nasz Dziennik* attacked the authors of *Zamiast Procesu*,<sup>23</sup> who exposed hate speech of five right-wing nationalistic titles, including *Nasz Dziennik*.<sup>24</sup>

The newspaper has been eager to publish speeches of Edward Moskal, president of Związek Narodowy Polski and Kongres Polonii Amerykańskiej who exposes ever-new attacks on Poland and the Poles, especially in the context of Polish-Jewish relations. In his New Year address president Moskal appealed for ‘Poland to remain being Poland.’<sup>25</sup> He was outraged that ‘the Polish foreign affairs minister listens in the Israeli parliament to a choir of attacks, attributing the Holocaust to Poland and the Poles.’ Moskal also warned about Jewish demands for ‘imaginary compensations.’ Because of such statements Moskal became controversial in the Polish media. *Nasz Dziennik* defended him, dismissing the accusations that Moskal’s statements were antisemitic. Moreover, the newspaper claimed that with accusations of antisemitism the Jews and the media tried to cover up the Polish suffering.<sup>26</sup> Also,

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<sup>22</sup> W. Wybranowski, ‘Polak jako troglodyta’, *Nasz Dziennik*, 26: 31 Jan. 2001, p. 5.

<sup>23</sup> S. Kowalski, M. Tulli, *Zamiast procesu. Raport o mowie nienawisci*, (Warsaw, 2003); for the review see: H. Kwiatkowska, ‘Bad News’, *EEJA*, 35/1 (June 2005), pp.125-128.

<sup>24</sup> ‘Bolesna rzeczywistość i nadzieja’, *Nasz Dziennik*: 292, 16 Dec. 2003, p. 16; J. R. Nowak, ‘Antypolski bubel za holenderskie “srebrniki”’, *Nasz Dziennik*: 279, 2 Dec. 2003, p. 10

<sup>25</sup> *Nasz Dziennik*, 5: 6-7 Jan. 2001, p. 20.

<sup>26</sup> K. Warecki. ‘Antysemityzmem maskują krzywdy Polaków’, *Nasz Dziennik*, 57: 8 Mar. 2002, p. 1.



the newspaper became Moskal's platform for publicising his views and for political games. It published his speech entitled 'Do not fear' alluding to the words of Jesus and to the statement often used by pope John Paul II. In this speech Moskal disclosed deliberate Jewish attempts to destroy the Polish Diaspora.<sup>27</sup>

As shown above the articles about alleged anti-Polonism are yet another way to present the Poles as victims. Besides, writing extensively about the attacks on Poland, *Nasz Dziennik* feels free to attack the Jews. At the same time we observe a great imbalance in the newspaper's judgements; antisemitism is only imagined by Jews while anti-Polonism is a hard proven fact. Nevertheless, *Nasz Dziennik* builds up the anti-Polonism phenomenon on a fact that Poland is often misrepresented in the international media. However, the newspaper fails to see that this largely comes from ignorance and that Poland is not the one and only country presented through the lens of stereotypes. The theme of anti-Polonism is closely linked to the Jedwabne case and to Jewish property restitution. On the other hand, *Nasz Dziennik* launched a campaign exposing the crimes committed on Poles by Ukrainians. However, it does not view it as an anti-Ukrainian witch-hunt. So again Poland can criticise and accuse others, while no one, even some Poles, should criticise Poland and the 'real Poles'. In *Nasz Dziennik* the image of Poland and of the Polish nation is so sacred and unblemished that a word of criticism or asking for an apology are seen as a profanation.

Although *Nasz Dziennik* is very emotional about the matter it points out to a lack of consequence in the media and some historical works. It became a trend to speak of the Soviets, the Communists and the Nazis, separating the ideology from nationality. At the same time the media and the scholars tend to write that Poles murdered Jews in Jedwabne. Precisely this contrast hurts the authors and the readers of *Nasz Dziennik*. On one side there are Poles murderers and on the other Nazis murderers. While a German can disassociate himself from a Nazi, how can a Pole disassociate himself from other Poles? If one builds an ideology based on an idealised image of his nation, then this dissociation is impossible to make. Thus *Nasz Dziennik* had to dismiss or justify those dark moments in Polish history that blemished the national honour. Hence, the newspaper found itself in a vicious circle, constantly fighting away criticism that could threaten this over-idealised image.

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<sup>27</sup> E. Moskal, 'Nie lękajcie się', *Nasz Dziennik*, 58: 9-10 Mar. 2002, p. 6.



Interestingly, the very concept of Jewish anti-Polonism in its current form is not exactly *Nasz Dziennik*'s continuation of Endecja ideology. Endecja saw Jews as an internal enemy who wanted to take over Poland, who were sucking out its resources and prevented it from flourishing. In that sense Endecja viewed Jewish existence as anti-Polish. However, what *Nasz Dziennik* refers to is an international conspiracy, of Jews or else Zionists who seek the destruction of Poland and start implementing it by their anti-Polish slurs. This concept of anti-Polonism as an international Jewish conspiracy can be traced back to the Soviet inspired anti-Zionist propaganda of 1968. In its Polish version Zionists were accused of 'slandering Poland'. Interestingly J. Kosiński's book was used, just as in *Nasz Dziennik*, as evidence of such an anti-Polish campaign.<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>28</sup> J. Schatz, *The Generation. The Rise and Fall of the Jewish Communists of Poland*, (Berkeley and Oxford, 1991), pp. 293-304.



## Chapter IX

### Israel

The Middle East conflict gives rise to concern among the general public worldwide. People who otherwise have no connection to the region hold and express their views on the matter. In the era of the Internet and 24-hour news televisions there are no longer ‘distant wars in far-flung corners of the world’; thanks to the media all disasters and conflicts happen in front of our eyes. In addition, the fight between Palestinians and Israelis stirs up emotions of international public opinion because of the backdrop of sacred sites of Judaism, Islam and Christianity. This is a personal connection that makes many believers across the world think that they are entitled to have a say in the decision making process about the future of the region. There are many bloody conflicts happening in the world and the struggle in Sudan is just one of the examples, but they do not attract as much attention of the international public as the Middle East conflict does. Religious reasons cannot account for all initiatives related to the Middle East, especially not for the growing anti-Zionism among the political left. However, among the Polish public religious reasons are very important in explaining reactions to the situation in the Middle East.

Anti-Zionism has been branded as ‘the new antisemitism’.<sup>1</sup> Many commentators understand this ‘new’ phenomenon as a mutation of the old antisemitism with the variation that the mythical Jew has been substituted for the state of Israel. Like the Jews who in the past were refused equal rights, now Israel is refused the same treatment as other states, or in more extreme cases its very right to exist is challenged. On the other hand the increase of antisemitic incidents in the Diaspora in recent years leads some to conclude that anti-Zionism is just another way to attack the Jews, not just Israelis but Jews anywhere. The use of the anti-Zionist rhetoric as a vehicle for spreading anti-Jewish prejudice is not new. The anti-Jewish purge in Poland in 1968 was carried out under an anti-Zionist banner. Similarly, other Soviet satellites led their ‘anti-Zionistic’ campaigns. The campaign spread into the

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<sup>1</sup> P. Iganski, B. Kosmin (eds.), *A new antisemitism? Debating Judeophobia in 21<sup>st</sup>-century Britain*, (London, 2003); for a journalistic approach see: P. Chesler, *The new anti-Semitism*, (San Francisco, 2003). See also articles: I. Cotler, ‘Human rights and the new anti-Jewishness’, *The Jerusalem Post*, 5 Feb. 2004; B. Klug, ‘The collective Jew: Israel and the new antisemitism’, *Patterns of Prejudice*, 37/2 (June 2003), pp. 117-138; A. Shapira, ‘Israeli perceptions of anti-Semitism and anti-Zionism’, *The Journal of Israeli History*, 25/1 (March 2006), pp. 245-266.



West in the 1970s and affected especially liberal and leftist intellectuals. This anti-Israel hysteria led to the infamous UN resolution equating Zionism with racism in 1975.

So the fact that anti-Zionism today is characterised by its popularity among the liberal intellectuals is not so 'new'. Writers, feminists, university lecturers, trade union activists and students sometimes very uncritically took to defending the Palestinian cause. Moreover anti-Zionist views became respectable<sup>2</sup>; in the language of pop culture we can say it is 'trendy' to demonstrate such views. Anti-Zionism became such a prominent agenda in some western media that it threatens their journalistic objectivity.<sup>3</sup> Interestingly, anti-Zionism also became a common language of the liberal left and nationalistic right. The anti-Israeli rhetoric in *Nasz Dziennik* is only a step ahead in its viciousness from the *Guardian* or *Le Monde*.<sup>4</sup>

Another trait of the anti-Zionism is 'the attempt to stigmatise Israel as a "Nazi" state'.<sup>5</sup> R. Wistrich wrote these words in 1985. Since then the discussion has changed in such a way that stigmatisation of Israel as a Nazi state is a norm. One is now obliged to attempt to 'de-Nazify' Israel. In my view it is not the rhetoric of the 'new antisemitism' or its main proponents that are really new but this shift in the general perception, that attacking Israel is a norm while defending it is perceived as extremism.

If one can rate the importance of a particular theme for a newspaper only on the grounds of the frequency, with which it devotes the front page to the subject, then *Nasz Dziennik* definitely attaches much significance to the Middle East conflict. Some explanation for this involvement can be sought in the papacy of John Paul II, who very often called for peace in the region. His appeals are frequently cited in the articles reporting on the conflict. However, it would be very misleading to suggest that *Nasz Dziennik* simply followed the late pope in his emotional involvement in the matter. Regardless of how highly venerated by the newspaper John Paul II might have

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<sup>2</sup> A. H. Rosenfeld, *Anti-Zionism in Great Britain and beyond: A "Respectable" Anti-Semitism?*, The American Jewish Committee, (np, 2004).

<sup>3</sup> For a study of the BBC's reporting on the Middle East see: D. Davies, 'Hatred in the air: the BBC, Israel and anti-Semitism', in: P. Iganski, B. Kosmin (eds.), *A new antisemitism?...*, p. 130-147 Also: T. Asserson, E. Mironi, 'The BBC and the Middle East: a critical study' (2002), [www.bbcwatch.com](http://www.bbcwatch.com)

For a discussion of newspapers such as the *New Statesman*, the *Independent* and the *Evening Standard* see article by W. Pickett, 'Nasty or Nazi? The use of antisemitic topoi by the left-liberal media', in: P. Iganski, B. Kosmin (eds.), *A new antisemitism?...*, p. 148-166.

<sup>4</sup> P. Chesler, *The new anti-Semitism*, (San Francisco, 2003), p. 135.

<sup>5</sup> R. Wistrich, *Anti-Zionism as an expression of anti-Semitism in recent years*, (Jerusalem, 1982), p. 11.



been, *Nasz Dziennik* has always had a very selective approach to his teaching. For example the newspaper never adopted or even publicised his thoughts on Catholic-Jewish dialogue.

Grażyna Dziedzińska is an author of numerous articles/essays analysing the situation in the Middle East and recalling its historical roots. The publicist's interpretations and opinions are based on what at first seems like her own experiences gained through the travels in the region of the conflict, and especially into the occupied territories. She definitely writes as if she were an eyewitness, though whether she was one or just read news reports is never clear. Her style is far from that of a dry record of events. The author vividly portrays the situation; she wants the reader to feel her dread and anger, and to empathise with the Palestinians. However, she goes much further than the empathy, presenting half-truths and popularising Arab martyrdom mythology. All that is done without a shadow of doubt and without any compassion for the situation of the other side. Moreover, in order to strengthen her point she quotes Jewish intellectuals; 'Judeo-Nazis from Tel Aviv – as the Jewish occupiers are described by the Israeli philosopher and humanist Yeshayahu Leibowitz'.<sup>6</sup> Dziedzińska referred to the actions of the Israelis as 'the killing of the Nation'.<sup>7</sup> The author spoke with irony about the attitude of the Israelis: 'To the small groups of Palestinians who will survive after the massacres of the occupiers, advocates of the Greater Israel will in the future assure the status of "obedient little natives", isolated in "Bantu-like enclaves" and carrying out the most dirty and demeaning works as the free labour force.'<sup>8</sup>

In another article, Dziedzińska reported on the actions of Israeli soldiers: First, in the dead of night, [...], one can hear the growing rumble. Palestinians awake. Women still unconscious from sleep suddenly get up; sleepy children shout frightfully, men feverishly seek some refuge for families. And the hell begins: the rumble of exploding bombs and rocket missiles [...]. In the morning, on the ruins of houses, stunned in horror women hug frightened, hungry children; tanks enter the camp of refugees, and after them come bulldozers. To accomplish the work of the destruction, they knock down the remaining houses, afterwards they dig through the fields, olive orchards, that

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<sup>6</sup> G. Dziedzińska, 'Woli śmierć od wygnania', *Nasz Dziennik*, 231: 3 Oct. 2003, pp. 10-11.

<sup>7</sup> G. Dziedzińska, 'Zabijanie narodu', *Nasz Dziennik*, 289: 12 Dec. 2000, pp. 12-13.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid.



were tilled affectionately and with care for 15 years, now they will not bear their first fruit [...].<sup>9</sup>

Such description grips the reader, especially when it is followed by a reminder of the pope's appeals for the peace in the Holy Land. Dziedzińska has used similar techniques in other articles, a dramatic picture of a Palestinian boy in the ruins and her emotional reports on life of 'Palestinian children [who] are the most frequent victims of the Israeli pacification in the refugees camps'<sup>10</sup> create an impression that Palestinians are not committing any violent attacks, they are the only victims of the conflict. She talked about 'dogs trained to attack Palestinians' and 'anti-Palestinian pogroms'. Further, she also highlighted that 'Jewish state grew out of terror'. She concluded that 'the Holy Father appeals to stop the terror', but since in the newspaper the Palestinian terrorist acts are not exposed, this statement is most likely to be interpreted by the reader that the Pope supports the Palestinians. What here was a suggestion, became a bolder statement when Dziedzińska talked of the 'unequal struggle against the Israeli occupier' and 'the Holy Father's compassion for the Palestinian nation.'<sup>11</sup> There was no mention whether the pope has any compassion for the Israelis.

This Christian pacifist voice was contrasted by the attitude of the Prime Minister Ariel Sharon, who according to the author 'does not take into account the voices calling his government to come to their senses, but he shows off his arrogance and the lawlessness in the face of the public opinion, proclaiming that armed attacks on the defenceless Palestinian civilians and on children slinging [stones], are dictated by "the necessity to defend Israel" '.<sup>12</sup> The statement that followed would shock any reader: 'from the beginning of the intifada Israelis killed some 520 Palestinians, including 214 children.' Further, Dziedzińska wrote about illegal activities of Israel, such as building new settlements on the occupied territories, she affirmed that out of fear of being accused of Antisemitism, the journalists are silent about these activities. The author admitted that 'the scale of Israeli provocations and repressions towards the Palestinians shock even some Israelis – a small minority of the righteous among their own nation', so they oppose the conspiracy of silence and criticize the government policy. The allusion to the Israeli concept of 'Righteous Gentiles' is only one of many

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<sup>9</sup> G. Dziedzińska, ' "Szalom" po trupach', *Nasz Dziennik*, 142: 20 June 2001, p. 10.

<sup>10</sup> G. Dziedzińska, 'Palestyńczycy osamotnieni i osaczeni', *Nasz Dziennik*, 236: 7 Oct. 2004, p. 9.

<sup>11</sup> G. Dziedzińska, 'Był ojcem swego narodu', *Nasz Dziennik*, 266: 13-14 Nov. 2004, p.19.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid.



attempts to portray Israel as similar as or even worse than Nazi Germany. Elsewhere, Dziędzińska made references to the individual cases of the Palestinian children killed by Israelis, she also alerted the readers about the practice of breaking of hands of Palestinian children. She summed up these as ‘practices resembling Nazis methods’. Dziędzińska also declared that the Palestinians are ‘condemned to extermination’.<sup>13</sup> The word ‘zagłada’ used here is often used in Polish as a synonym to the Holocaust, another attempt to convince the reader that the Palestinians suffer at the hands of the Jews what the latter suffered from the Nazis.

Another article of the same author, devoted to the suffering of the Palestinians starts with the words: ‘This year Jews, especially Israelis, with a special care prepared for themselves the holocaust remembrance celebration – the Day of the Extermination and the Heroism which long ago became an opportunity to appropriate the suffering, that was experienced in concentration camps also by the Poles and other nations’.<sup>14</sup> After this introduction follows a description ‘of the massacre in Jenin’ on 9 April 2002, exactly at the time of Yom HaShoah celebrations. Then Dziędzińska compared Ariel Sharon to Hitler ‘because of the psychopathic cruelty, arrogance, “commander’s” impulses and the uncontrollable desire of conquests in the name of creating “Eretz Israel” (Greater Israel) [sic]’. The author, though seemingly condemning suicide attacks executed by the Palestinians, stressed that they were an act of desperation in the face of a great tragedy that was inflicted on these people. Further, even more grave accusations were addressed to the Israeli authorities: ‘Journalists are the No. 2 enemy after Palestinians, for the Israelis who fear the truth and the disclosure of their inhuman behaviour. Therefore with cold blood they killed journalists from France, Indonesia, Turkey, a female journalist from Italy, while many were wounded. Just in the course of the last days of the Israeli offensive journalists were subjected to all kinds of repression.’<sup>15</sup> Finally, the article was illustrated by the photos of crying Palestinian children, inhabitants of Jenin on ruins of their homes and of Israeli soldiers in Bethlehem armed in full gear.

‘Political saboteurs’<sup>16</sup> is how Sebastian Karczewski described the Israeli authorities, and particularly Ariel Sharon who was accused of purposely destroying all

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<sup>13</sup> The use of ‘holocaust’ with small ‘h’ is used to accentuate that Jewish suffering during World War II was not unique. G. Dziędzińska, ‘Skazani na zagładę’, *Nasz Dziennik*, 109: 11 May 2004, p. 12.

<sup>14</sup> G. Dziędzińska, ‘Bez opamiętania’, *Nasz Dziennik*, 91: 18 Apr. 2002, pp. 10-11.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid.

<sup>16</sup> ‘Polityczni sabotażyści’, *Nasz Dziennik*, 99: 27-28 Apr. 2002, p. 18.



opportunities of establishing peace in the Middle East. The author recalled 'war crimes' of Israel from 1953, which took place in the village of Quibia, and from 1967 in the region of the South Military Headquarters, which was under Ariel Sharon's command; 'those crimes were condemned in two UN resolutions'. According to Karczewski, the responsibility for Israel's 'policy of genocide' is also shared by the United States. On the same page, Krzysztof Warecki wrote about the conditions for peace in the Middle East and the position of the Vatican in the face of the conflict. Both articles are a part of a 8-pages long supplement entitled 'Palestine under the ruins'.<sup>17</sup>

Subsequent articles echoed the siege of the Nativity Basilica in Bethlehem by the Palestinians, which outraged the large section of public opinion, especially its Roman Catholic part. G. Dziedzińska focused on 'the Israeli places of torture'.<sup>18</sup> Repeating Abu Dabi TV she wrote about cases of the targeted assassinations of the Palestinians. Dziedzińska quoted shocking murder cases of Palestinian children by Israeli soldiers. The author affirmed that 'Sharon mendaciously publicises these attacks as the response to the Palestinian assassinations'. Typically he twists everything round. Israel 'murders the Palestinians systematically, every day, regardless, whether they execute the attacks, or not'. Besides 'Sharon provokes these attacks, by demolishing Palestinian houses, wiping out the crops, condemning the Palestinians to hunger and a life of misery, all that in order to jeopardise any peace negotiations and establishment of the Palestinian state'.<sup>19</sup> Referring to the report of the Nelson Mandela's Foundation of the Protection of Political Prisoners, the author in detail described the 'methods of torture' of Palestinians in Israeli prisons<sup>20</sup>, and added her own comment: 'Interrogations and tortures are executed by specially instructed thugs, expert hit men. Their methods are identical, or similar, to the methods used on prisoners by the Gestapo, NKVD, UB [Security Office]. (No wonder, after all, in 1956 and 1968 many UB torturers with a great degree of experience in mistreating detainees, left Poland and found refuge in Israel)'. What seemed like an article about the Israeli-Palestinian conflict turned out to be only a pretext to express accusations on the involvement of Jews in the Communist security

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<sup>17</sup> Ibid., pp.11-18

<sup>18</sup> G. Dziedzińska, 'Za kratami izraelskich katowni', *Nasz Dziennik*, 144: 23-24 June 2002, p. 16.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid.

<sup>20</sup> On this matter see: N. Lochery, *Why blame Israel?*, (Cambridge, 2004), p. 179.



apparatus. The newspaper very often uses this technique of ‘plugging in’ accusations from the Polish-Jewish disputes to the material on Israel.

The greatest impression on the reader is made by the article exposing (alleged) ‘crimes of Israel’<sup>21</sup>, where G. Dziedzińska extensively quoted the report of Amnesty International about the situation of the Palestinian population. The author, in describing Israeli activities in Jenin and Nablus, uses explicit epithets ‘the massacre’ and ‘genocide’, and calls the Israeli soldiers ‘army terrorists’. She was also outraged at the helplessness of the UN in punishing those guilty of these crimes. Dziedzińska referred to the account of Javier Zuning, the Head of the Regional Strategy Department of Amnesty International, who repeated the testimonies of the eyewitnesses from the camp in Jenin, that: ‘Hundreds of children were killed under the ruins of houses or on the streets, because Israeli snipers, seated everywhere, shot kids “armed” with stones or those child “terrorists” who just happened to play there – all according to the Sharon’s instruction to pound away at them. Also, many children died, because the Israelis had announced the curfew that lasted 20 days; previously cutting off the electricity, water, sanitary sewage system’. There followed the accounts of the events given by the inhabitants of Jenin and Nablus.

Similarly in the article ‘Israeli appetites for Hebron’<sup>22</sup> G. Dziedzińska does not spare words of criticism directed against Israel. According to her: ‘Taking advantage of world opinion’s concern with the Iraq problem, the occupying Israeli administration hurriedly realizes plans to seize the greatest possible number of cities, villages, and of Palestinian land on the occupied West Bank of the Jordan. [Israel] provokes a vicious cycle of terror, that will cause deaths of civilians, including children, the elderly and ill; intimidates the Palestinian community, organizes armed provocations etc.’ About the people who attacked Jews in Hebron, the author speaks of ‘Palestinian partisans’, whereas their operations are, according to her, ‘a “present” for the Israeli advocates of the conquest of whole of Palestine’ and a pretext to bring the liquidation of the Palestinian Autonomy.

Prof. Iwo Cyprian Pogonowski joined the discussion about the Middle East conflict in the article ‘Oil, Israel, Poland’<sup>23</sup>. He recalled the beginnings of the state of Israel, especially drawing attention to the role of Stalin in its creation; ‘NKVD carried

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<sup>21</sup> G. Dziedzińska, ‘Zbrodnie Izraela’, *Nasz Dziennik*, 272: 22 Nov. 2002, pp. 10-11.

<sup>22</sup> G. Dziedzińska, ‘Izraelskie apetyty na Hebron’, *Nasz Dziennik*, 277: 29 Nov. 2002, p. 14.

<sup>23</sup> I. C. Pogonowski, ‘Nafta, Izrael, Polska’, *Nasz Dziennik*, 168: 20-21 July 2002, pp. 10-11.



out a sequence of brutal and murderous pogroms of the Jewish population in all [Soviet] satellite countries in years 1945-1946', so that frightened Jews *en mass* would leave these countries. Pogonowski summed up the current position of the state with words: 'Today Israel is engaged in the strategic complex of the American forces in the Middle East. This fact makes it easy for the American Jews to gain the strongest position that they ever had in the history of the United States. At the present a key element in the maintenance of the decisive Jewish influence in America is the financial control of the election campaigns for all important positions'. The moral of the article is as follows; the USA, thanks to Israel, has influence in the Middle East, which ensures for both these countries 'invaluable influence on the fate of the world'.

In another article 'Israel whitewashed'<sup>24</sup> Prof. Pogonowski continues the theme of Jewish influence, over international affairs in general, and the American media in particular. Citing the New York organisation, Fairness and Accuracy in Reporting (FAIR), the author spoke about deliberate silence in the American media about the situation of the Palestinians in the occupied territories and about the creation of new illegal Israeli settlements on the West Bank. According to Pogonowski: 'In the language of the most of American press articles and analyses, all Palestinian acts of defence are classified as the acts of terror, as described by the hysterical American press under the propagandist campaign "the war on terror". Only Jewish extremists take advantage of this "war on terror" [...]'. Further, the author affirmed that because of the media, public opinion ignores sufferings of Palestinians and begins to think that 'as opposed to the one committed against Jews, the crime committed against Palestinians is unimportant'; 'actually one can kill Arabs with impunity'. He continued: 'We know such assumptions already from history – the racism of Nazis or the erection of ghetto walls, that today in macro scale Israel raises in the Holy Land.' Again, here we see an example of the ever-repeated argument that Israelis are worse than the Nazis. In his conclusion Prof. Pogonowski admitted, that 'honest Jews' exist, they defend the Palestinians and criticize Sharon's conduct, but they are 'hushed up' or their voices are never even allowed to be heard in the international media. This recalling of 'honest Jews' is meant to present the views in the article as 'balanced'.

According to *Nasz Dziennik* 'Jews subdued the US'<sup>25</sup> and 'the White House is Israel's puppet'<sup>26</sup>. I. C. Pogonowski posed a rhetorical question is 'Bush – a pushover

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<sup>24</sup> 'Izrael wybielany', *Nasz Dziennik*, 3: 4-5 Jan. 2003, p.18.

<sup>25</sup> I. C. Pogonowski, 'W interesie Wielkiego Izraela', *Nasz Dziennik*, 188: 12 Aug. 2004, pp. 12.



of Sharon?’<sup>27</sup> only to give an affirmative answer in his essay, in which one of the arguments was based on the fact that Bush is a practicing Protestant, this makes him a fierce Zionist. On many occasions Pogonowski repeated that Bush as other ‘Protestant fundamentalists believe[s] that the Israeli victory is a condition for Jesus’s return.’<sup>28</sup> Even more Bush was said to be ‘on the leash of Zionists – neo-conservatives.’<sup>29</sup> His ‘permanent “war for democracy”’ was compared to the idea of the permanent war of Trotsky, another link between Bush and the Jews. Ironically the newspaper argued ‘Bush fights terrorists that are being provoked by Israel.’<sup>30</sup> Further, we learn that not only the US president but also ‘American administration is dominated by Zionists’<sup>31</sup> hence their unfair policy towards Palestinians. Also, ‘Zionists from the Pentagon carry out the building of the “Greater Israel”’, which ‘will lead to a world hecatomb.’<sup>32</sup> Hence, Pogonowski suggests that we can talk about the ‘Israelisation of US foreign policy’ since the ‘pacification of Iraq’ was planned ‘long before the catastrophe of the WTC in New York in 2001, by American Zionists, Jews as well as “born-again Protestants” devoted to the extremist wing of the Likud party in Israel.’<sup>33</sup> The same article implied that Israel’s influence extends to the fate of the whole world.

In order to strengthen the negative image of Israel and her politicians *Nasz Dziennik* brought up reports that ‘according to the analysts president Kennedy was killed because he opposed that Israel should be in the possession of the atomic bomb.’<sup>34</sup> Mysterious analysts were not identified in the article. Interestingly, later the newspaper quoted M. Vannunu: ‘Israel carried out the assassination of J. F. Kennedy to distract the attention of the world from the construction of the atomic bomb.’<sup>35</sup> Though the newspaper wanted to seem impartial by putting question marks in the headlines reporting these revelations, it did not seek counter views or presented any details on the reports. In fact they are treated with the assumption that they are unquestionable. This process of demonisation continued with the Zionist – neo-

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<sup>26</sup> ‘Biały Dom izraelska marionetka’, *Nasz Dziennik*, 153: 2 July 2004, p. 7.

<sup>27</sup> I. C. Pogonowski, ‘Bush popychadłem Szarona’, *Nasz Dziennik*, 112: 15 May 2003, p.10.

<sup>28</sup> I. C. Pogonowski, ‘Od szczerości po mentorski ton’, *Nasz Dziennik*, 41: 18 Feb. 2004, p. 9.

<sup>29</sup> I. C. Pogonowski, ‘Arogancki i nieodpowiedzialny prezydent’, *Nasz Dziennik*, 171: 23 July 2004, p. 11.

<sup>30</sup> I. C. Pogonowski, ‘Samohipnoza syjonistów i jej skutki’, *Nasz Dziennik*, 222: 23 Sept. 2003, p.10.

<sup>31</sup> ‘Gest wobec Powella’, *Nasz Dziennik*, 109: 12 May 2003, p. 5.

<sup>32</sup> I. C. Pogonowski, ‘Plany podbojów i pokoju’, *Nasz Dziennik*, 283: 5 Dec. 2003, p. 10.

<sup>33</sup> I. C. Pogonowski, ‘Izraelizacja polityki zagranicznej USA?’, *Nasz Dziennik*, 157: 8 July 2003, p.12.

<sup>34</sup> I. C. Pogonowski, ‘Od szczerości po mentorski ton’, *Nasz Dziennik*, 41: 18 Feb. 2004, p. 9.

<sup>35</sup> ‘Mossad zabił prezydenta USA?’, *Nasz Dziennik*, 174: 27 July 2004, p. 5.



conservatives being presented as the initiators of the use of torture in Iraqi prisons.<sup>36</sup> In case the reader was not clear why there is violence in Iraq, Pogonowski explained that 'Israeli-controlled Kurdish military group creates chaos in Iraq.'<sup>37</sup> At the same time, threat from Muslim fundamentalists was seen as unreal, being exaggerated by Zionists who 'control all important media in the USA' and want to stir up another world war. Moreover, we learned that 'many analysts question the evidence pointing to Muslims as final perpetrators of this tragedy' – the attack on the WTC.<sup>38</sup>

The (security) wall erected by Israelis became a prominent topic in *Nasz Dziennik*. First of all, it gave a powerful illustration to the image of injustice inflicted by the Israelis that the newspaper often referred to and highlighted the reported imbalance of power between the two sides of the conflict. The twin images of the ruins of Palestinian homes versus the high concrete walls of Israel, became a visual summary of the Middle East conflict as seen by *Nasz Dziennik*. Apart from portraying Israel as building, quite literally, obstacles in order to jeopardize the chance for peace, the Israeli information campaign about the 'protective fence' gave the newspaper a weapon in its battle to uncover Jewish hypocrisy. What in the West would be called PR, image management, spin doctoring, in Poland, where the memory of the Communist propaganda is still fresh, is seen as simply manipulation. In Polish, as in English, the word 'fence' means: 'a barrier especially of wood or of wood and wire for enclosing, bounding or protecting land.'<sup>39</sup> The pictures of what has been constructed by the Israeli government do not resemble what one might erect in the back garden.

I. C. Pogonowski rhetorically asked whether Israeli construction is like the "Berlin wall" or only a fence?<sup>40</sup> He also criticized calling the wall a fence in the American press as a gross manipulation. Further, the consequences of building of the wall were identified as destruction of 'whole quarters'. The article was illustrated with a photograph of a little Palestinian boy riding a bike alongside the monstrously tall wall that stretches as far as the horizon. The very same picture has been so often reprinted by the newspaper that it became a symbol of the Palestinian plight. The

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<sup>36</sup> I. C. Pogonowski, 'Bush nie rozumie natury konfliktu?', *Nasz Dziennik*, 36: 12-13 Feb. 2005, p. 7.

<sup>37</sup> I. C. Pogonowski, 'W interesie Wielkiego Izraela', *Nasz Dziennik*, 188: 12 Aug. 2004, p. 12.

<sup>38</sup> I. C. Pogonowski, K. Warecki, 'Syndrom oblężonej twierdzy', *Nasz Dziennik*, 102: 2-4 May 2003, p. 6.

<sup>39</sup> *The Wordsworth Concise English Dictionary*, (Ware, 1994).

<sup>40</sup> I. C. Pogonowski, ' "Mur berliński" czy tylko płot?', *Nasz Dziennik*, 162: 14 July 2003, p.10.



caption under the photograph read: 'The wall built in the "heart" of the future Palestinian state is going to imprison two million Arabs'.

Pogonowski's tone and rhetoric became more aggressive in the article 'A biased point of view'. Referring to the reports on the wall construction he stated that 'more Americans start to realise that they are being lied to by the Jewish dominated media.'<sup>41</sup> 'American press uses the term "fence" to describe a wall [made of] steel and concrete, much higher and longer than the Berlin wall, which is supposed to fulfil the same role as the walls that used to surround the Jewish ghettos'. According to the author the use of the word 'fence' proves that the 'American press is under Jewish control'. The comparisons between the Israeli actions and those of the Nazis were drawn at every opportunity. The caption under a picture of the wall read: 'Palestinian towns day after day are being turned into ghettos'. The readers were also informed that 'Jewish extremists try to impose on Palestinian PM Mahmud Abbas, a role similar to that, which Nazis imposed on Judenrats in ghettos during the German occupation of Poland.'<sup>42</sup> While to talk about building trust between Sharon and Abbas 'is like talking about building mutual trust between a head of a Judenrat in a ghetto and a German commandant, who can at any time kill the former'. *Nasz Dziennik* exploited the comparisons between the Nazis and Israelis to the maximum, headlines such as 'Ghetto gets to Jerusalem'<sup>43</sup> appeared frequently on the front page.

Significantly, Pogonowski, who often used the views of Jewish liberals who are eager to criticize Israel, to support his arguments, here claimed that across the political and social spectrum Israelis jeopardize the chance for peace: '[...] Zionist extremists and Jewish liberals have their differences. However, both streams present one firm stance, which makes establishing peace [in the Middle East] impossible'. In addition, on the basis that Israel has a 'bigger arsenal of the weapons of mass destruction than the UK', he maintained that 'in reality it is Israel that is the threat to its neighbours'. Finally, Zionists-Jews were discredited 'as supporting homosexuals, violence towards Muslims and abortion, which is a problem when it comes to allying with Zionists-"born again" Christians.'<sup>44</sup> So, in one sentence Pogonowski undermined some tenets of his Zionist conspiracy theory.

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<sup>41</sup> I. C. Pogonowski, 'Jednostronny punkt widzenia', *Nasz Dziennik*, 189: 14-15 Aug. 2003, p. 8.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid.

<sup>43</sup> W. Moszkowski, 'Ghetto dociera do Jerozolimy', *Nasz Dziennik*, 10: 13 Jan. 2004, pp. 1, 5.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid.



As the Israelis kept building the wall, the outrage of *Nasz Dziennik* grew; this undertaking was viewed as ‘another provocation of Sharon’<sup>45</sup>. Indeed, Ariel Sharon is constantly portrayed as a key obstacle on the road to peace. ‘He will hurry erection of the wall. The Israeli PM does not want peace with Palestinians’<sup>46</sup>. Israel was blamed for jeopardizing the peace efforts since ‘in order to make the realization of the peace plan even harder, Israel carries intensive repressions against the activists of Palestinian independence organizations.’<sup>47</sup> Even as the readers have heard that “‘The apartheid wall” is getting higher’<sup>48</sup>, on a rare occasion they were also informed why Israel might want to build the wall: ‘Israel shamelessly explains this territorial robbery as protecting Jewish settlements’. At the same time *Nasz Dziennik* stressed that the very fact that Jewish settlements exist there is a ‘violation of the law.’ So in Israel’s case one illegal action is justified by another illegal action. In the campaign against ‘apartheid’<sup>49</sup> *Nasz Dziennik*’s rhetoric resembles those anti-Zionist arguments which were used by the Communists in 1968.

The separation wall was named ‘the wall of shame and robbery’<sup>50</sup>, the daily reports unveiled the horrific humanitarian crisis in Palestine for which, according to the newspaper, Israel bore sole responsibility as “‘The wall of shame” increased poverty.’<sup>51</sup> Even Israeli MPs acknowledged that ‘malnourishment in the Palestinian Authority is similar to that in sub-continental Africa.’<sup>52</sup> Other alarming reports came from the Red Cross: ‘Israeli wall breaks the humanitarian laws’ as Israel has been blamed for cutting out water from Palestinians.<sup>53</sup> Elsewhere it has been proclaimed that Israelis are terrorists because they rob others of water.<sup>54</sup>

However, despite all these heart-rending descriptions of Palestinian hardship, *Nasz Dziennik* did not consider the Palestinians as most affected by the construction of the wall. In fact, the wall was mainly seen as an ‘anti-Christian wall’<sup>55</sup>, because it cut through the church properties. This led Father Battistelli to a conclusion: ‘The

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<sup>45</sup> ‘Kolejna prowokacja Szarona’, *Nasz Dziennik*, 230: 2Oct. 2003, pp. 1, 7.

<sup>46</sup> *Nasz Dziennik*, 277: 28 Nov. 2003, p.7.

<sup>47</sup> ‘Będą budować mur’, *Nasz Dziennik*, 186: 11 Aug. 2003, p.7.

<sup>48</sup> *Nasz Dziennik*, 182: 6 Aug. 2003, p. 6.

<sup>49</sup> ‘Sprzeciw wobec apartheidu’, *Nasz Dziennik*, 265: 14 Nov. 2003, p. 1.

<sup>50</sup> *Nasz Dziennik*, 179: 2-3 Aug. 2003, p. 6.

<sup>51</sup> *Nasz Dziennik*, 41: 18 Feb. 2004, p. 7.

<sup>52</sup> Ibid.

<sup>53</sup> ‘Odcina od wody zawłaszcza ziemię’, *Nasz Dziennik*, 42: 19 Feb. 2004, p. 7.

<sup>54</sup> G. Dziedzińska, ‘Ziemia i woda tylko dla Izraela’, *Nasz Dziennik*, 152: 2 July 2003, p. 10.

<sup>55</sup> ‘Antychrześcijański mur’, *Nasz Dziennik*, 236: 9Oct.2003, p. 6.



present situation with all its negative consequences touches foremost the Christians.’<sup>56</sup> This is in line with general accusations raised by *Nasz Dziennik* against Israel that it violates the religious rights of both Muslims and Christians. Referring to the report of the USA Department of State the newspaper argued that discrimination of these groups is comparable to similar acts committed in China and North Korea.<sup>57</sup> *Nasz Dziennik* also presented the views of Dr Adam Bieniek who deplored Israel for ‘highlighting on every occasion a sense of religious and national superiority [which] recalls of eugenics in Nazi Germany’.<sup>58</sup> In the same article the newspaper disapproves Israeli refusal to ‘merge with the Palestinian Authority’.

*Nasz Dziennik* published appeals against the wall from the papal emissary<sup>59</sup> and various cardinals.<sup>60</sup> However, the appeals for the Palestinian cause were often only a background of the main issue, interests of the Christian Church, as ‘Catholic Bishops remind us about the rights for the Palestinian Christians’, the Jerusalem patriarch was reported to appeal for the preservation of ‘the Christian character of the Holy Land.’<sup>61</sup> In the reports of *Nasz Dziennik* the Church dignitaries never talked about the crisis faced by the Israeli civilians. The slogans to build ‘bridges not the walls’<sup>62</sup> suggested that Israel only builds the latter never the former. Also, the words of the pope John Paul II ‘the Holy Land needs not walls but bridges, dialogue and understanding’ were interpreted as referring solely to Israelis, as they appeared in articles that claimed that the Israelis treated Christians as slaves.<sup>63</sup>

The references in the headlines to the Holy Land and not to Israel, Palestine, Palestinian Autonomy or the occupied territory suggest that *Nasz Dziennik* does not treat Israelis or Palestinians as fully autonomous on their land. The Holy Land term seemingly gives the Christians, including *Nasz Dziennik*’s authors, rights to the land. The articles reveal the expectations that the views of the Catholic Church officials and suggested policies should be taken into account by both sides.

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<sup>56</sup> Ibid.

<sup>57</sup> ‘Lista niezmienna’, *Nasz Dziennik*, 297: 22 Dec. 2003, p. 8.

<sup>58</sup> ‘Strach przed jednym państwem’, *Nasz Dziennik*, 8: 10-11 Jan. 2004, pp. 1, 7.

<sup>59</sup> ‘Przeciw murowi bezprawia’, *Nasz Dziennik*, 268: 18 Nov. 2003, p. 6.

<sup>60</sup> ‘Wyrzeknijcie się Wielkiego Izraela!’, *Nasz Dziennik*, 266: 15-16 Nov. 2003, pp. 1, 7.

<sup>61</sup> ‘Życie “pod młotem”’, *Nasz Dziennik* 15 Jan. 2004, No.12, p.6

<sup>62</sup> S. Karczewski, ‘Potrzeba mostów nie murów’, *Nasz Dziennik*, 13: 16 Jan. 2004, pp. 1, 7.

<sup>63</sup> ‘Chrześcijanie traktowani jak niewolnicy’, *Nasz Dziennik*, 89: 15 Apr. 2004, pp. 1, 7.



Following the verdict of the International Justice Tribunal *Nasz Dziennik* triumphantly pronounced that ““The wall of shame” is illegal’<sup>64</sup> and urged to ‘Take down this wall!’<sup>65</sup>

‘Colonisation of Palestine’<sup>66</sup> and Israel’s expansion – *Nasz Dziennik* interpreted the problem of Israeli settlers as a confirmation of Israel’s imperial ambitions. Hypocrisy of Israelis often has been reported as: ‘Israel illegally enlarges the settlements on the Palestinian land...next to de-assembled ones’<sup>67</sup>, ‘Jewish fundamentalists build 2 settlements in place of every erased one’.<sup>68</sup> At the same time the legitimacy of actions of ‘Palestinian activists’ was not questioned. Moreover these actions were often romanticised in words ‘Palestinians fight with their bare hands to free themselves from slavery.’<sup>69</sup> *Nasz Dziennik* was outraged at the Israeli plans to build more flats in the West Bank and blamed Ariel Sharon for ruining the chances for peace again.<sup>70</sup> We never hear whether any Israelis are opposed to the settlements.

Among demands to ‘give up Greater Israel!’<sup>71</sup>, the issue of settlements leads on to claims that Ariel Sharon holds imperialistic plans ‘to create the Greater Israel from the Nile to the Euphrates’<sup>72</sup>. This is what I would call an ‘avalanche technique’; *Nasz Dziennik* started with a fact, here the problem of settlements, and embellished it with so much rhetoric and interpretation that it gradually grew into a portrayal of Israel building an empire. This empire was allegedly conceived in the mind of the evil character of the international news reports in *Nasz Dziennik*, Ariel Sharon, ‘possessed by the vision of Greater Israel, is not going to give up on conquering neighbouring countries.’<sup>73</sup> Sharon was helped by ‘Bush [...who] declares everywhere that Israel has a right to commit terrorist crimes.’<sup>74</sup> Again, what was initially reported as Sharon’s or Sharon’s and Bush’s imperial plans has been projected onto all Israelis or more generally Zionists and then simply Jews. Even further, the chief publicist of *Nasz*

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<sup>64</sup> P. Wesołowski, ‘“Mur hańby” jest nielegalny’, *Nasz Dziennik*, 160: 10-11 July 2004, p. 1.

<sup>65</sup> ‘Rozbierzcie ten mur’, *Nasz Dziennik*, 170: 22 July 2004, pp. 1, 6.

<sup>66</sup> ‘Demontaż na pokaz, budowa dla ekspansji’, *Nasz Dziennik*, 146: 25 June 2003, p. 1.

<sup>67</sup> Ibid.

<sup>68</sup> I. C. Pogonowski, ‘Demografia po stronie Palestyńczyków?’, *Nasz Dziennik*, 176: 30 July 2003, p. 11.

<sup>69</sup> Ibid.

<sup>70</sup> ‘Otwarta ekspansja’, *Nasz Dziennik*, 231: 3 Oct. 2003, p. 6; ‘Szaron rozbudowuje osiedla’, *Nasz Dziennik*, 193: 18 Aug. 2004, p. 6; ‘Nadal będą kolonizować’, *Nasz Dziennik*, 250: 25-26 Oct. 2003, p. 9; ‘Szaron niszczy szanse na pokój’, *Nasz Dziennik*, 198: 24 Aug. 2004, p. 1, 6.

<sup>71</sup> ‘Wyrzeknijcie się Wielkiego Izraela!’, *Nasz Dziennik*, 266: 15-16 Nov. 2003, p. 1, 7.

<sup>72</sup> I. C. Pogonowski, ‘Irak, Izrael i przedwyborcze slogany w USA’, *Nasz Dziennik*, 52: 2 Mar. 2004, p. 12.

<sup>73</sup> G. Dziedzińska, ‘Syria po “niewłaściwej stronie”’, *Nasz Dziennik*, 257: 4 Nov. 2003, p. 12.

<sup>74</sup> Ibid.



*Dziennik*, I. C. Pogonowski, argued that '**Jews want a permanent war**'.<sup>75</sup> This collective was reported to have great tools to put these plans into life; 'an important asset for the megalomaniacs creating the Greater Israel from the Nile to the Euphrates is domination over the western media by the Jews.'<sup>76</sup> The war in Iraq was used as a proof of the 'hegemony of Greater Israel.'<sup>77</sup> As if that was not enough Israel was reported plotting an attack on Iran – 'another war to ensure Israel's hegemony in the region.'<sup>78</sup>

As the avalanche of speculations rolled down, the reader learned about 'Sharon's atomic blackmail'<sup>79</sup> that forced America to act in Iraq in Israel's name so Israel could implement her 'plan to exploit oil and water from Iraq.'<sup>80</sup> Proving the threat of an 'atomic blackmail' the newspaper quoted Sharon allegedly saying 'Arabs have the oil but we have the matches.'<sup>81</sup> The newspaper for years has been accusing Israel for stirring up a nuclear war and was outraged whenever 'Israel strengthened its nuclear arsenal'.<sup>82</sup> However, when Iran develops its atomic technology *Nasz Dziennik* sees it as the country's legitimate defence of sovereignty.<sup>83</sup> In October 2004 *Nasz Dziennik* sought to convince the reader that 'Israel will attack Iran.'<sup>84</sup>

'Israel is the biggest threat to world peace'<sup>85</sup> became another mantra of *Nasz Dziennik*. In November 2004 the newspaper triumphantly announced that the results of a survey carried out among EU citizens.<sup>86</sup> The respondents of the survey most frequently identified Israel as a serious danger to the world peace. With 59% of the respondents holding this view Israel was perceived as a bigger threat than Iran (53% pointed it out as threatening world peace), the USA (55%) and Korea (53%). In November 2004 alone *Nasz Dziennik* published six articles about these results. Subsequent articles, although they did not include new data, used headlines to proclaim that the subject is the latest news. Clearly a survey commissioned by the EU

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<sup>75</sup> I. C. Pogonowski, 'Imperium i hegemonia', *Nasz Dziennik*, 10: 13 Jan. 2004, p.12. [Bold print mine].

<sup>76</sup> I. C. Pogonowski, M. Ryba, 'Ofiarnicy i dorobkiewiczze', *Nasz Dziennik*, 71: 24 Mar. 2004, p. 10.

<sup>77</sup> I. C. Pogonowski, 'Nafta i budowa "wielkiego" Izraela', *Nasz Dziennik*, 26: 1 Feb. 2005, p. 12.

<sup>78</sup> W. Moszkowski, 'Po Iraku kolej na Iran', *Nasz Dziennik*, 46: 24 Feb. 2005, p. 6.

<sup>79</sup> I. C. Pogonowski, 'Atomowy szantaż Szarona', *Nasz Dziennik*, 202: 30-31 Aug. 2003, p.11.

<sup>80</sup> Ibid.

<sup>81</sup> K. Niewola, 'Atomowy szantażysta', *Nasz Dziennik*, 101: 29 Apr. 2004, p. 16.

<sup>82</sup> 'Rozpętają nuklearną wojnę?', *Nasz Dziennik*, 235: 8 Oct. 2003, pp. 1, 6; W. Marszewski, 'O krok od atomowej wojny?', *Nasz Dziennik*, 239: 13 Oct. 2003, pp. 1, 6; W. Maszewski, 'Izrael wzmacnia arsenał nuklearny', *Nasz Dziennik*, 123: 27 May 2004, pp. 1, 6

<sup>83</sup> 'Iran broni swej suwerenności', *Nasz Dziennik*, 221: 20 Sept. 2004, p. 6.

<sup>84</sup> 'Ostatnie zabiegi przed atakiem Izraela?', *Nasz Dziennik*, 247: 20 Oct. 2004, pp. 1, 6.

<sup>85</sup> P. Wesołowski, 'Izrael największym zagrożeniem dla pokoju', *Nasz Dziennik*, 257: 4 Nov. 2003, pp. 1, 7.

<sup>86</sup> 'Izrael zagrożeniem dla pokoju', *Nasz Dziennik*, 256: 3 Nov. 2003, pp. 1, 6.



and which presented Israel in a bad light was not to be missed by the readers. *Nasz Dziennik* exclaimed ‘the truth is out’,<sup>87</sup> thus treating the opinion of the public as if it were unquestionable. Criticism from the Israeli side that the survey did not present the Palestinian Authority in the list of countries were dismissed by *Nasz Dziennik* as ‘hysteria’ and attempts at ‘censorship’.<sup>88</sup>

Apart from the essays on the subject, *Nasz Dziennik* publishes current reports from the Middle East in the section ‘The World’ on pages 6 and 7, while those reports that highlight the suffering of Palestinians are given the prime spot on the front page. Very often next to them appear photographs of Palestinian children, illustrating their terrible experiences. Generally those reports are brief notes, summaries of the press agencies’ reports, which mention the place and the time, the number of victims, etc. However, the headlines and captions under the photographs come from *Nasz Dziennik* and are already an interpretation of these events. So from the headlines one is able to infer, what attitude the newspaper holds towards the two sides involved in the conflict.

- ‘The provocation of the Israeli government’<sup>89</sup> (about the issue of the construction of a mosque in Nazareth),
- ‘Sharon will continue killing’<sup>90</sup>; the sub-title: ‘Israel publishes “the death list”’
- ‘The Israeli secret service attacks’<sup>91</sup>,
- ‘They attacked the Basilica’<sup>92</sup>,
- ‘Without self-control’<sup>93</sup> (about Israelis at the siege of the Basilica in Bethlehem),
- ‘Palestine under ruins’<sup>94</sup> (the supplement),
- ‘The camp in Jenin no longer exists’<sup>95</sup> (illustrated with the photos of children in ruins, the article talks about 13-year old boy who is a warrior of the jihad and wants to blow himself up in a suicide bomb attack),

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<sup>87</sup> A. Lewandowski, ‘Wyszło szydło z worka’, *Nasz Dziennik*, 260: 7 Nov. 2003, p. 16.

<sup>88</sup> ‘Żydzi żądają cenzury’, *Nasz Dziennik*, 269: 19 Nov. 2003, p. 6.

<sup>89</sup> *Nasz Dziennik*, 274: 25 Nov. 1999, p. 1.

<sup>90</sup> *Nasz Dziennik*, 182: 7 Aug. 2001.

<sup>91</sup> *Nasz Dziennik*, 19: 23 Jan. 2002, p. 1.

<sup>92</sup> *Nasz Dziennik*, 83: 9 Apr. 2002, p. 1.

<sup>93</sup> *Nasz Dziennik*, 91: 18 Apr. 2002, p. 1.

<sup>94</sup> *Nasz Dziennik*, 99: 27-28 Apr. 2002, pp. 11-18.

<sup>95</sup> *Nasz Dziennik*, 109: 11-12 May 2002, pp. 1, 6-8.



- ‘39 days of the siege of the Basilica of the Nativity’<sup>96</sup> (illustrated with photographs of Palestinian children and Israeli soldiers),
- ‘Israel announces retaliation’<sup>97</sup>, the sub-title: ‘The bomb attack in Jerusalem’(the article mentioned 19 dead and 50 wounded in the assassination, but the stress is put not on terrorist activities of Palestinians, but on the future retaliation of Israel; arrested Al-Aqsa fighters are called ‘activists’),
- Father of a killed Palestinian girl holds her corpse in his arms (the photograph on the front page)<sup>98</sup>,
- ‘They murdered a family’<sup>99</sup>, the sub-title: ‘New victims of the Israeli incursion’,
- ‘They sign and raid’<sup>100</sup>, the sub-title: ‘Against the agreement Israel again attacked the camp of refugees’,
- ‘To school under the barrel’<sup>101</sup>, (the content: ‘The following school year for Palestinian children, many from them are seriously malnourished’),
- ‘They raided the factory’<sup>102</sup>, the photo of a small Palestinian boy in ruins of his own house in Gaza,
- Palestinian children in Nablus and pointing at them a barrel of an Israeli tank<sup>103</sup> (photograph),
- ‘Natanyahu incites to war’ (the content: ‘after the assassination in Israel Natanyahu called to attack Iraq even without the agreement of UN’<sup>104</sup>),
- ‘They shoot at children’<sup>105</sup>; the sub-title: ‘Israeli soldiers opened fire to protesting teenagers’,
- ‘With rockets against children. The tragic outcome of Israeli retaliations’, ‘300 Palestinian children were killed since September 2000’<sup>106</sup>,
- ‘They attacked the hospital’<sup>107</sup>; the sub-title: ‘The brutal pacification of Gaza’
- A Palestinian girl covered in blood (photograph)<sup>108</sup>,

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<sup>96</sup> *Nasz Dziennik*, 115: 18-19 May 2002, p. 15.

<sup>97</sup> *Nasz Dziennik*, 141: 19 July 2002, p. 7.

<sup>98</sup> *Nasz Dziennik*, 157: 8 July 2002, p. 7.

<sup>99</sup> *Nasz Dziennik*, 198: 30 Aug. 2002, p. 7.

<sup>100</sup> *Nasz Dziennik*, 199: 27 Aug. 2002, p. 7.

<sup>101</sup> *Nasz Dziennik*, 206: 4 Sept. 2002, p. 7.

<sup>102</sup> *Nasz Dziennik*, 209: 7-8 Sept. 2002, p. 7.

<sup>103</sup> *Nasz Dziennik*, 215: 14-15 Sept. 2002, p. 1.

<sup>104</sup> *Nasz Dziennik*, 220: 20 Sept. 2002, p. 7.

<sup>105</sup> *Nasz Dziennik*, 229: 1 Oct. 2002, p. 7.

<sup>106</sup> *Nasz Dziennik*, 233: 5-6 Oct. 2002, p. 1.

<sup>107</sup> *Nasz Dziennik*, 235: 8 Oct. 2002, p. 1.



- ‘They killed for home-made fireworks: Israelis opened fire to protesting teenagers’; the caption: ‘A Palestinian tries to evacuate a wounded boy from the Israeli fire’<sup>109</sup>,
- Women and children on ruins of the Palestinian bomber’s house <sup>110</sup>,
- ‘Israeli poisons’<sup>111</sup>; ‘the Israeli army uses against the Palestinians toxic gases, forbidden by the Geneva Convention’; photo of barefoot Palestinian children running away from an Israeli tank (p. 1); ‘Jews torture even children’, ‘perpetrate a genocide’; ‘despotism on sale’,
- ‘They invaded Jenin. Another Israeli attack on the PA’<sup>112</sup>,
- The funeral of 3 year old boy – victim of the Israeli attack on the refugee camp in Rafah<sup>113</sup>,
- ‘The night round-up. Israel again invaded Gaza’ <sup>114</sup>,
- ‘They are killing journalists’<sup>115</sup>,
- ‘Israel stirs up to new wars’<sup>116</sup>,
- ‘Israel threatens and blackmails’<sup>117</sup>, picture of a Palestinian boy saving a toy from the ruins of his home,
- ‘Who will save the peace?’<sup>118</sup>; ‘Israel provokes retaliation from Palestinian radical organisations’,
- ‘They crossed out peace efforts’<sup>119</sup> picture of a woman in front of her destroyed home,
- ‘The occupiers are retracting’<sup>120</sup> Shin Bet tormented Palestinian prisoners,
- ‘Israel provokes. They [Palestinians] will talk despite attacks’<sup>121</sup>,
- ‘They crush the peace with butts’<sup>122</sup> quotes a Palestinian negotiator that Israel still building settlements,

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<sup>108</sup> *Nasz Dziennik*, 236: 9 Oct. 2002, p. 1.

<sup>109</sup> *Nasz Dziennik*, 238: 11 Oct. 2002, p. 7.

<sup>110</sup> *Nasz Dziennik*, 249: 24 Oct. 2002, p. 6.

<sup>111</sup> *Nasz Dziennik*, 251: 26-27 Oct. 2002, p. 7.

<sup>112</sup> *Nasz Dziennik*, 251: 26-27 Oct. 2002, p. 7.

<sup>113</sup> *Nasz Dziennik*, 266: 15 Nov. 2002, p. 1.

<sup>114</sup> *Nasz Dziennik*, 269: 19 Nov. 2002, p. 5.

<sup>115</sup> *Nasz Dziennik*, 103: 5 May 2003, p.5.

<sup>116</sup> *Nasz Dziennik*, 101: 30 Apr.-1 May 2003, p. 1, 6.

<sup>117</sup> *Nasz Dziennik*, 116: 20 May 2003, p. 6.

<sup>118</sup> *Nasz Dziennik*, 143: 21-22 June 2003, p. 1.

<sup>119</sup> *Nasz Dziennik*, 135: 11 June 2003, p. 6.

<sup>120</sup> *Nasz Dziennik*, 151: 1 July 2003, p. 6.

<sup>121</sup> *Nasz Dziennik*, 189: 14-15 Aug. 2003, p. 8.

<sup>122</sup> *Nasz Dziennik*, 179: 2-3 Aug. 2003, p. 6.



- ‘They don’t even want a truce’<sup>123</sup>,
- ‘Israel is a threat to peace’<sup>124</sup>,
- ‘They won’t cease the occupation’<sup>125</sup>; ‘Israel makes the realization of the peace plans impossible’,
- ‘Israel rejects truce’<sup>126</sup> by demanding liquidation of the Palestinian military troops,
- ‘They push the vicious cycle of death’<sup>127</sup> picture signed: ‘Palestinian fighters’
- “‘License to kill’?”, Israel<sup>128</sup>,
- ‘They invade and kill’, Israel<sup>129</sup>,
- ‘Israel kills again’<sup>130</sup> picture: Palestinian boys go to school with their hands up
- ‘Israel hardens the sanctions’<sup>131</sup>,
- ‘Israel again is sowing death’<sup>132</sup>,
- ‘Strategy for a confrontation’<sup>133</sup> Israel enflames the situation,
- ‘Bloody retaliation’<sup>134</sup>,
- ‘Israel is provoking a war’<sup>135</sup>,
- ‘Blind fury’<sup>136</sup> Israel’s retaliation for attack in Haifa,
- ‘They persecute, starve and threaten’<sup>137</sup>, ‘UN envoy accuses Israeli authorities of causing the humanitarian catastrophe’,
- ‘Invasions instead of talks’<sup>138</sup>,
- ‘They talk about peace but make war’ (the Holy Land)<sup>139</sup>,
- ‘With tanks on Nablus. Bloody invasion of Israeli occupiers’<sup>140</sup>,
- ‘Israel will continue to murder’<sup>141</sup>,

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<sup>123</sup> *Nasz Dziennik*, 181: 5 Aug. 2003, p. 7.

<sup>124</sup> *Nasz Dziennik*, 190: 16-17 Aug. 2003, p. 9.

<sup>125</sup> *Nasz Dziennik*, 192: 19 Aug. 2003, p. 6.

<sup>126</sup> *Nasz Dziennik*, 197: 25 Aug. 2003, p. 7.

<sup>127</sup> *Nasz Dziennik*, 198: 26 Aug. 2003, p. 6.

<sup>128</sup> *Nasz Dziennik*, 218: 18 Sept. 2003, p. 8.

<sup>129</sup> *Nasz Dziennik*, 219: 19 Sept. 2003, p. 6.

<sup>130</sup> *Nasz Dziennik*, 204: 2 Sept. 2003, pp. 1, 6.

<sup>131</sup> *Nasz Dziennik*, 211: 10 Sept. 2003, p. 8.

<sup>132</sup> *Nasz Dziennik*, 212: 11 Sept. 2003, p. 7.

<sup>133</sup> *Nasz Dziennik*, 214: 13-14 Sept. 2003, p. 9.

<sup>134</sup> *Nasz Dziennik*, 246: 21 Oct. 2003, p. 8.

<sup>135</sup> *Nasz Dziennik*, 236: 9 Oct. 2003, p. 7.

<sup>136</sup> *Nasz Dziennik*, 233: 6 Oct. 2003, pp. 1, 6.

<sup>137</sup> *Nasz Dziennik*, 266: 15-16 Nov. 2003, p. 7.

<sup>138</sup> *Nasz Dziennik*, 282: 4 Dec. 2003, p. 8.

<sup>139</sup> *Nasz Dziennik*, 299: 24-26 Dec. 2003, p.

<sup>140</sup> *Nasz Dziennik*, 302: 30 Dec. 2003, p. 7.



- ‘They demolish like the Nazis’<sup>142</sup> photo: Palestinians at the ruins of their house,
- ‘With rockets against the civilians’<sup>143</sup>,
- ‘They threaten and raid’<sup>144</sup> Israeli soldiers blocked Arafat’s headquarters,
- ‘Repressions in Nablus’<sup>145</sup>,
- ‘They invaded with tanks’<sup>146</sup>,
- ‘They invade and bomb’<sup>147</sup>.

The above headlines show partiality of *Nasz Dziennik*. The reader might be under the impression that Palestinians are the only victims in the conflict. Repetitively the message is spelled out for the reader: ‘Israel kills’ and even more shocking: ‘Israel kills Palestinian children’. *Nasz Dziennik* is the only national newspaper in Poland that so frequently draws attention to the suffering of Palestinian children, which is undoubtedly an important issue that merits the attention of public opinion. However, at the same time the newspaper commits a gross manipulation by not showing the sufferings of Israeli civilians, mothers and children who die in terrorist attacks and the agony of their distraught families. When on rare occasions Israeli victims are mentioned in *Nasz Dziennik*, the only reference is made to numbers, for example ‘19 dead’. There is a great contrast between the dramatic captions under the photographs illustrating the Palestinian suffering and the newspaper’s lack of interest in the suffering of the Israeli victims of the conflict. In *Nasz Dziennik* there is no space for the photos of Israeli parents lamenting deaths of their children.

The imbalance in the reporting of *Nasz Dziennik* allows it to be characterized as a pro-Palestinian medium. As a rule Palestinian suicide attacks are never viewed as acts of terrorism, they are ‘acts of retaliation’, because in *Nasz Dziennik* the term terror is exclusively reserved to describe actions of the Israeli side.<sup>148</sup> More often we hear about the ‘Palestinian fighters [who] are determined to free the occupied

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<sup>141</sup> *Nasz Dziennik*, 71: 24 Mar. 2004, p. 1, 7.

<sup>142</sup> *Nasz Dziennik*, 121: 25 May 2004, p. 1, 5.

<sup>143</sup> *Nasz Dziennik*, 112: 14 May 2004, p. 7.

<sup>144</sup> *Nasz Dziennik*, 104: 5 May 2004, p. 7.

<sup>145</sup> *Nasz Dziennik*, 148: 26-27 June 2004, p. 7.

<sup>146</sup> *Nasz Dziennik*, 151: 30 June 2004, p. 7.

<sup>147</sup> *Nasz Dziennik*, 234: 5 Oct. 2004, p. 5.

<sup>148</sup> For example: I. C. Pogonowski, ‘Bush popychadłem Szarona?’, *Nasz Dziennik*, 113: 15 May 2003, p. 10.



territories and create their state there',<sup>149</sup>, soldiers from Hezbollah<sup>150</sup> and the Palestinian resistance movement.<sup>151</sup> The latter term especially is used so the reader draws a parallel between the Palestinian actions and those of the Polish resistance movement during the German occupation.

Violation of human rights<sup>152</sup> by Israel is extensively explored, while the human rights of Israeli civilians travelling on buses are not being discussed. There is an avalanche of information about numerous provocations by the Israeli army,<sup>153</sup> demolitions of houses in Rafah, massacres of civilians in Gaza, bloody pacification,<sup>154</sup> the killing of Palestinians participating in a peaceful demonstration.<sup>155</sup> The suffering of Israeli civilians is ignored altogether, with an exception of a very few examples where laconic reference to the number of victims is made.

However, even on those rare occasions when the number of Israeli victims is mentioned, the personalized and dramatic descriptions of the suffering of the Palestinian side outbalance those accounts and ensure that the reader will have no sympathy for Israelis as we do not hear about their age, sex or the circumstances in which they died. For example, in the article 'Escalation despite the "[road]map"'<sup>156</sup>, though there is a brief reference to 55 Israeli victims of a (terrorist) attack, the focus remains on the Israeli army's invasion of Gaza, and subsequent death of a 2-year-old Palestinian child. On the other hand the Palestinian violence is reported as if it were natural: 'After yesterday Palestinian attacks occurred again': illustrated by a photograph which shows a destroyed shop in Rosh Hain. It is a very rare occasion when images of Israeli losses are shown, even though they do not convey a personal, human story.<sup>157</sup> While Palestinian suffering is exposed with passion, the threat to the lives of Israelis is reported in a very matter-of-fact fashion in words 'land missiles have been shot from Gaza to Israel'.<sup>158</sup> Again, Israeli victims of a bus bomb feature only as numbers '15 people died, 90 injured'.<sup>159</sup> This story is illustrated by a picture of an empty burnt out bus, photographed in a way that makes it look like there was

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<sup>149</sup> 'Ataki będą kontynuowane', *Nasz Dziennik*, 239: 13 Oct. 2003, p. 6.

<sup>150</sup> 'Kolejny cios w "mapę drogową"', *Nasz Dziennik*, 185: 9-10 Aug. 2003, p.7.

<sup>151</sup> K. Niewola, 'Izraelska pięta Achillesa', *Nasz Dziennik*, 12: 15-16 Jan. 2005, p. 7.

<sup>152</sup> P. Wesołowski, 'UE bezczynna wobec Izraela', *Nasz Dziennik*, 291: 13 Dec. 2004, p. 6.

<sup>153</sup> 'Rozejm wisi na włosku', *Nasz Dziennik*, 188: 13 Aug. 2003, pp. 1, 6.

<sup>154</sup> 'Izrael robi swoje', *Nasz Dziennik*, 118: 21 May 2004, pp.1, 7.

<sup>155</sup> 'Rozstrzelali demonstrantów', *Nasz Dziennik*, 117: 20 May 2004, p. 7.

<sup>156</sup> 'Eskalacja mimo "mapy"', *Nasz Dziennik*, 102: 2-4 May 2003, p. 6.

<sup>157</sup> 'Rozejm wisi na włosku', *Nasz Dziennik*, 188: 13 Aug. 2003, p. 1, 6.

<sup>158</sup> 'Przemocą grzebią pokój', *Nasz Dziennik*, 196: 23-24 Aug. 2003, p. 9.

<sup>159</sup> 'Ataki w sercu Izraela', *Nasz Dziennik*, 205: 1 Sept. 2004, p. 5.



hardly any damage done to it. Again there is no human tragedy portrayed or a moving caption underneath. Similarly the bomb attack in Taba lacks any account of Israeli suffering.<sup>160</sup>

As I showed in chapter II: Holocaust, *Nasz Dziennik* accuses Jews of disregarding the suffering of others, but in its descriptions of the Middle East conflict the newspaper credits only the suffering of the Palestinian side. The manner in which *Nasz Dziennik* presents the Middle East conflict contributes to the reinforcement of antisemitic stereotypes. First of all, it happens through the dehumanising of Israelis, who, the newspaper suggests, are the only side in the conflict that inflicts suffering. Israelis are also victims of the conflict, but *Nasz Dziennik* is silent about it. The newspaper writes about Israeli soldiers pointing guns at the Palestinian children, but hardly even mentions Israeli civilians being blown up by bombs in terrorist attacks. Such one-sided presentation of the conflict agrees with an image of the Jew created by the newspaper. In *Nasz Dziennik* no one speaks for the Israeli victims or for the victims of the murder in Jedwabne... On the other hand, one reads much about Jewish torturers who collaborated with the NKVD. Similarly Jews in Israel are exclusively portrayed as murderers of children. This negative image of the Israeli, by analogy, reinforces the negative image of the Polish Jew, and of the Jew in general. Besides the newspaper mystifies the image of the Palestinians, contrary to its suggestions they are not only passive sufferers in the conflict. Some Palestinians commit crimes on the Israeli civilians; however *Nasz Dziennik* refers to them as ‘partisans’ and ‘activists’. Such one-sided presentation of the conflict can only encourage hatred of Israelis, which in the light of other articles *Nasz Dziennik* would appear to be the newspaper’s goal.

*Nasz Dziennik* questions the very legitimacy of Israel. On numerous occasions we are reminded that only Stalin could have created Israel and that the country has been built on terror. Naturally, the newspaper’s publicists never ponder the fact that the current frontiers of Poland have been created under Stalin’s great influence. While eager to expel Israeli settlers from their homes *Nasz Dziennik* would never envisage giving in to demands of some German groups to return Lower Silesia or West Pomerania. Historical differences aside, my point is that in *Nasz Dziennik* there is not even a grain of empathy for Israel.

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<sup>160</sup> ‘Zamach na Izraelczyków’, *Nasz Dziennik*, 238: 9-10 Oct. 2004, pp. 1,7.



Two images of Israelis dominate in *Nasz Dziennik*; one of a Nazi-like ruthless soldier, the other of a Zionist who infiltrates foreign governments to further Israel's imperial ambitions through sparking never-ending conflicts. In the light of my chapter on the Holocaust, the Nazi-like image of the Jew in my opinion is a bid to erase the image of the Jew-victim. If *Nasz Dziennik* can prove that after the Holocaust Jews emerged to inflict the same ordeal on innocent Palestinians, then the Jews have no moral right to feel as victims of a unique historical event.

Articles by G. Dziedzińska and other authors often compare activities of the Israeli side to those of the Nazis in occupied Poland. The vocabulary: 'the construction of the ghetto wall', 'the curfew', 'checkpoints', 'occupied territories' and 'refugee camps' permit those journalists to develop such comparisons. We can see here the great power that language itself can play on our conscious or even subconscious. For a Pole the term 'occupation' evokes images of the Nazi occupation, so the very expression 'Israeli occupation' evokes a link to Nazi actions, regardless whether such parallel is fair or justified. Thus, I would argue that because of the vocabulary commonly used to describe the Middle East conflict, the subconscious of the public is already receptive to comparisons between Israelis and Nazis. *Nasz Dziennik* sows the words of hatred on an already fertile ground.

Although the newspaper does not call for Jews to 'get out of Palestine' it does not accept the state of Israel as it is today. Apart from supporting the disengagement from Gaza and the West Bank, the newspaper makes vague suggestions about the creation of one state – gathering Jews and Palestinians, at the same time pronouncing that Jews are going to be defeated by demographic changes. What would the Jewish fate be like in the state in which they would be a minority, the newspaper does not elaborate. It is only fair to say that *Nasz Dziennik* does not trouble itself about the fate of Israel and Israelis. More specifically, Pogonowski looks for ways to undermine the right of Israel to exist. This right is eagerly questioned because Israel was 'created by Stalin' and because it is a 'threat to the international peace'. There is a difference between the rhetoric of the two main publicists who write on Israel – Dziedzińska and Pogonowski. Dziedzińska's emotional essays defend Palestinians and accuse Israelis. Her biased articles are damaging for Israelis, but a persistent reader can verify her accounts, for instance, her reporting on the alleged massacre in Jenin. One can also identify differences between the Nazi policies and those of Israel. Pogonowski's essays are emotionally detached, but beneath the layer of serious political analysis we



find a paranoid vision of the world, in which Jews are responsible for all wrongs and disasters. Israel is seen as a key factor in the building of power of the international Jewry. Thus Israel's position should be weakened among others by giving a green light to the Iran's atomic weapons programme. Jewish conspiracies as presented by Pogonowski are irrefutable, as one cannot challenge something that by definition is secret. The lasting effects of such theories on attitude of Poles towards Jews cannot be underestimated.

Finally, in the light of the articles on the Middle East conflict we can say that *Nasz Dziennik* is strongly pro-Palestinian. Therefore we ought to ask whether the newspaper is also pro-Arab and pro-Muslim? On the issue of the war in Iraq the newspaper takes a pro-insurgents and anti-American stance. In general *Nasz Dziennik* is very anti-American, mainly because it sees it as a 'tool' in Jewish hands. Also, the leader essayist I. C. Pogonowski dismissed the existence of an organized Muslim-fundamentalist group and saw the Jewish conspiracy responsible for the September 11<sup>th</sup> attack on New York.

However, the newspaper's reports about France and its Muslim population reveal discriminatory prejudice against Islam and its followers. Especially the reports and essays written by F. L. Ćwik<sup>161</sup> show that the newspaper has no binding pro-Arab or pro-Muslim sympathies. Thus, what we see in the reports on Israel is not a genuine pro-Palestinian stance, but calculated bias aimed solely at attacking the Jews.

Interestingly the pro-Palestinian bias of *Nasz Dziennik* is not dominating the public opinion in Poland. When faced with the question 'who is responsible for the Middle East conflict?' 13% of the respondents blamed the Israelis, 5% blamed the Palestinians, while 64% blame the two sides as equally responsible.<sup>162</sup> Interestingly, the listeners of Radio Maryja were likely to put all the blame on Israel. According to I. Krzemiński 'one can hardly talk about new antisemitism in Poland, especially about that specific complex of attitudes, which attacks Israel and at the same time harbours warm feelings towards the Palestinians.'<sup>163</sup> In general, Polish public opinion is highly prejudiced about Arabs and Muslims (though the surveys use the term Arabs, which does reflect general Polish ignorance that treats the two as synonyms). Such attitudes were present in Poland long before the increase of the international terrorism linked to

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<sup>161</sup> F. L. Ćwik, 'Od dechrystianizacji do arabskiego kalifatu', *Nasz Dziennik*, 44: 22 Feb. 2005, p. 6.

<sup>162</sup> I. Krzemiński, *Antysemitizm w Polsce i na Ukrainie*, (Warsaw, 2004), p. 163

<sup>163</sup> Ibid.



Muslim fundamentalists. This in itself is very interesting and deserves further research on why there are such negative attitudes towards Arabs and Muslims in Poland. My sense is that these stereotypes stem from the ideology advocated by favourite thinkers of the Endecja, such as F. Koneczny, for instance, who divided the world into civilizations and depicted the Arab-Oriental one as primitive, bloodthirsty and hostile to the Christian civilization.



## Chapter X

### Religious antisemitism?

Jewish-Catholic dialogue in Poland versus religious roots of antisemitism in *Nasz Dziennik*.

Most of the antisemitic statements made in *Nasz Dziennik* are concerned with Polish-Jewish history. They denote the conflict that derives from the need to protect the idealised image of Poles held in particular by nationalistic circles and their ideology. One may wonder whether the fact that the newspaper claims to be founded on Roman Catholic values is somehow related to its perception of the Jews. This may seem a relevant question bearing in mind centuries of Jewish-Christian relations.<sup>1</sup> However, no assumption that current antisemitism in Poland derives from Catholicism should be made hastily. In fact, there would have been no Polish-Jewish dialogue if it was not for the great involvement of some priests and progressive Catholic intellectuals. Their efforts to deal with the difficult past and break down stereotypes date back to the ‘Solidarity’ movement. Today, *Tygodnik Powszechny*, a progressive Catholic monthly *Więź* and many Catholic intellectuals,<sup>2</sup> contribute greatly to the promotion of mutual respect and understanding between Catholics and Jews as well as other faiths and between different Christian denominations. All these are in the spirit of putting into practice the philosophy behind *Nostra aetate*.<sup>3</sup>

However, the Polish Catholic Church remains divided, its largest section at best ambivalent towards Jews, while perceiving the dialogue efforts of other members as even

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<sup>1</sup> H. Maccoby, *Judaism on Trial: Jewish-Christian Disputations in the Middle Ages*, (London, 1982); C. Klein, *Anti-Judaism in Christian Theology*, (Philadelphia, 1978); J. Katz, *From Prejudice to Destruction: Anti-Semitism, 1700-1933*, (Cambridge, 1980).

<sup>2</sup> M. Czajkowski, *Lud przymierza*, (Warsaw, 1992); S. Musiał, *Czarne jest czarne*, (Kraków, 2003).

<sup>3</sup> Declaration *Nostra aetate* – Vatican II in: *Sobór Watykański II. Konstytucje, dekrety, deklaracje*, (Poznań, 1968), pp. 516-523; also see: *Notes on the Correct Way to Present Jews and Judaism in the Preaching and Catechesis of the Roman Catholic Church*, (Vatican City, 1985) published in: *Origins*, 15: 4 July 1985, pp. 102-107, and *L’Observatore Romano* (Polish edition) 6-7/1985. For critical comments on the above documents see: R. Modras, *Kościół katolicki i antysemityzm w Polsce w latach 1933-1939*, (Kraków, 2004), pp. 216.



dangerous to the Church.<sup>4</sup> The Church officials showed themselves to be slow and quite inefficient when dealing with priests expressing antisemitic views. This was especially the case when dealing with Father Henryk Jankowski, former chaplain of 'Solidarity'.<sup>5</sup> However, Jankowski's statements were mostly political and just because they were made by a priest it did not make them 'religious'. Nevertheless, failure of the Church to uproot antisemitism within the organisation creates the impression that it continues in its old ways despite the lessons it should have learnt after centuries of spreading hatred towards the Jews.

Interfaith dialogue is a minefield of potential misunderstandings. Essentially, I distinguish two types of dialogue: 'utopian' and 'realistic'. Utopian interfaith dialogue focuses on common beliefs in different religions. Hinduism, mistakenly described as polytheism, believes that all different cults and gods are like windows allowing us to look into the essence of one God. Utopian dialogue hopes that one day all major faiths will think of themselves as being equally important channels to meet God. Those who are familiar with doctrines of Judaism, Islam and Christianity recognize that the differences between those religions are impossible to overlook. All three, though making some concessions allowing the other faith to have hope for salvation, cannot abandon their claims of superiority over the others. Thus, realistic dialogue rather than making sweeping generalisations, focuses on differences and demands respect for differences that the dialogue partner presents.<sup>6</sup> This at times proves to be extremely difficult to implement.

Those involved in the Jewish-Christian, and more specifically Jewish-Catholic dialogue, called for a change of attitude towards Jews especially in such matters as the need for their evangelisation. The Roman Catholic Church began these profound changes during the Second Vatican Council. In this spirit some Catholic clergy conduct dialogue with the Jews. However, often despite the good intentions this dialogue is based on hope or even expectation that Jews will issue an equivalent of *Nostra aetate*, especially that

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<sup>4</sup> W. Chrostowski, *Rozmowy o dialogu*, (Warsaw, 1996), p. 122.

<sup>5</sup> For the most recent controversies surrounding Jankowski see: K. Katka, 'Fundacja ks. Jankowskiego: Watykan nie o nas', *Gazeta Wyborcza*, 11: 31 Jan. 2006, p. 6; M. Wąs, 'Ks. Jankowski: Moich pomników będzie więcej', *Gazeta Wyborcza*, 300: 27 Dec. 2005, p. 2; S. Łupak, M. Sterlingow, 'Prłat kontra pisarz. Na wokandzie', *Duży Format*, 34 in *Gazeta Wyborcza*, 212: 12 Oct. 2005, pp. 10-11.

<sup>6</sup> Compare: J. Sacks, *The Dignity of Difference*, (New York, 2002).



they will declare a positive attitude towards Jesus. Not to be mistaken for the belief in Jesus to be God, what some churchmen long for is the appreciation of Jesus and his teaching. Thus, even the document *Dabru Emet* published by Jewish liberal intellectuals disappointed many on the Catholic side.<sup>7</sup> Father Waldemar Chrostowski, who got disillusioned with his experience of the dialogue with the Jews thinks that: ‘we must ensure that in the Christian-Jewish dialogue the centre of new Jewish sensitivity is the consciousness who Jesus is for the Christians.’<sup>8</sup>

Not surprisingly many Jews ponder whether the ‘dialoguing’ Christians are not in fact proselytising. Having attended many ‘dialogue events’ in Poland I would say that while the Christian side does not wish to convert, it is definitely in need of a confirmation from the Jews that Christianity can somehow enrich Judaism. Polish progressive Catholics proclaim that their faith has been enriched by getting to know Judaism better. Thus they expect, almost as a courtesy from the other side, a confirmation that Jews can learn something from the Christian ethic. While some Jewish liberal intellectuals might be happy to make such statements, for religious Jews who feel they can be only guided by the Torah this is absolutely unacceptable. My very general impression is that Catholics want to talk about Jesus while Jews wish to talk about the persecution of their ancestors by the Catholic Church.

This sketch of Polish Jewish-Catholic dialogue is meant to provide a background for the analysis of the contentious events that led *Nasz Dziennik* to belittle the efforts made for reconciliation between the two sides.

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<sup>7</sup> See: *Znak*, Jan. 2003, no. 1/(572). In the issue entirely devoted to the declaration authors outlined the history of Jewish-Christian dialogue and the background of the dialogue led in the USA which resulted in the declaration. It also contained the full text of the declaration and explained its main theological implications. In addition, the volume included a text of the discussion about *Dabru Emet* of which the participants included leading Jewish and Catholic intellectuals: Halina Bortnowska, Father Michał Czajkowski, Konstanty Gebert, Father Hanspeter Heinz, Krzysztof Jabłonka, Father Łukasz Kamykowski, Stanisław Krajewski, John Pawlikowski, Rabbi Michael A. Signer, Stefan Wilkanowicz and Father Stanisław Wronka. For a critical Jewish Orthodox, as well as scholarly, view on the declaration see: D. Berger, ‘*Dabru Emet*: Some Reservations about a Jewish Statement on Christians and Christianity’, (Oct. 2002), <http://www.bc.edu/research/cjl/meta-elements/sites/partners/ccjr/berger02.htm>

<sup>8</sup> W. Chrostowski, *Rozmowy o dialogu*, (Warsaw, 1996), p. 122.



The existence of the Carmelite convent in Auschwitz for 15 years soured Jewish-Catholic relations.<sup>9</sup> The convent was located at Żwirowisko [lit. gravel pit], in Auschwitz I on the site where first inmates of the camp, Russian soldiers and political prisoners, were shot. The convent was established out of good intentions, reflected what non-Jewish victims believed in and was built away from Birkenau – the death camp where Jews were being mass murdered. Nevertheless, for most Jews the very presence of the convent, and of a big cross next to it, in Auschwitz was a major insult to their religious sensitivities. *Nasz Dziennik* used the controversy around the convent and the cross at Żwirowisko as a pretext for launching the campaign<sup>10</sup> to ‘Defend the Cross!’. These words, the motto of the campaign, were taken out of context; John Paul II said them during the mass in Zakopane in 1997 where Mount Giewont with its imposing cross provided an appropriate backdrop. Father J. Bajda launched an appeal to all Poles to defend the cross in Auschwitz.<sup>11</sup> In view of this article to move the cross to another place amounted to a coup against Christianity. The author argued that: ‘the cross still irritates those who want to rule the world [...], despite God’s law and the human right, whose dignity was revealed by Christ through his Sacrifice on the Cross [capitals used in the original text].’ He added that ‘the cross is inconvenient to those who want to destroy Poland.’ Bajda was also convinced that the expiation prayer should never cease in Auschwitz as ‘all people need Christ, even those who doubt and object, because the Saviour sacrifices himself for everyone.’ The article does not speak about the Jews directly, but it is clear that allusions such as ‘those who doubt’ and ‘want to rule the world’ refer to them.

Unlike Bajda, Prof. Ryszard Bender pointed directly to ‘Jewish circles and atheists’<sup>12</sup> as leading the campaign against the cross. He even named ring-leaders of the campaign – Konstanty Gebert<sup>13</sup> and Stanisław Krajewski,<sup>14</sup> who not only are Jewish but both happen to be grandchildren of prominent Communists. In *Nasz Dziennik* Jews are

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<sup>9</sup> See: E. Klein, *The Battle for Auschwitz. Catholic-Jewish relations under strain*, (London, 2001). G. Zubrzycki, *The Crosses of Auschwitz. Nationalism and Religion in Post-Communist Poland*, (Chicago and London, 2006).

<sup>10</sup> As I already pointed out in chapter II (p. 65) the crosses controversy never gained as much prominence as the Jedwabne one or even the theme about the ‘Holocaust industry’.

<sup>11</sup> J. Bajda, ‘Obronić Krzyż. Apel do wszystkich Polaków’, *Nasz Dziennik*, 34: 9 Mar. 1998, p. 8.

<sup>12</sup> Interview with Ryszard Bender, ‘Będziemy bronić Krzyża’, *Nasz Dziennik*, 45: 21-22 Mar. 1998, p. 3.

<sup>13</sup> Columnist of *Gazeta Wyborcza* and publisher of *Midrasz*.

<sup>14</sup> Prominent figure in the Jewish-Catholic dialogue, lecturer and writer.



often discredited for their Communist leanings, however Bender used a new rhetorical device – being related to a Communist even in a third generation is considered to be a stigma and discredits the opponents. Bender even predicted that those atheists (both are actually openly practicing Jews) with a Communist past ‘will soon demand removal of crosses from the Catholic temples.’ Another author instructed Jews to follow the example of Edith Stein ‘who found the truth in the Cross’.<sup>15</sup>

*Nasz Dziennik* presented pope John Paul II as being on their side in the conflict over the Auschwitz cross, despite the fact that the pope was actually a mediator in the conflict and supported the moving of the convent and the cross to a more appropriate place. One such liberal application of the pope’s words read: ‘The fact that crosses are erected as a sign of faith of the murdered is an indication of rejecting the fear, to which rejection the Holy Father appealed.’<sup>16</sup> *Nasz Dziennik* specialises in the free interpretation of John Paul II’s words, this also being the case when Poles debated whether to join the EU. Even when the pope was filmed saying something contrary to what *Nasz Dziennik* postulated, the newspaper ignored it or re-interpreted those words. Such practice was commented on by archbishop Życiński who saw in it ‘worrying signs of a selective approach to the Church’s teaching. In the West it is called “supermarket religiousness” because one chooses from a collection of truths.’<sup>17</sup> Paraphrasing Życiński, *Nasz Dziennik* decided to de-select from its shopping basket the Church’s teaching from *Nostra aetate*.

John Paul II’s pontificate was very important for the Christian-Jewish dialogue, as he not only paid a symbolic visit to the synagogue in Rome but played a key role in establishing official diplomatic relations between the Vatican and Israel. Moreover this pope rejected the ‘teaching of contempt’ for the Jews, and the replacement theology (supersessionism). He condemned antisemitism and talked about the Holocaust with compassion.<sup>18</sup> Although some may raise the criticism that John Paul II could have done more to promote inter-faith tolerance, overall most Jewish and Catholic commentators agree that this pope was genuinely concerned to improve Jewish-Catholic relations.

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<sup>15</sup> E. Sakowicz, ‘Krzyż i Żydzi’, *Nasz Dziennik*, 12: 15 Jan. 1999, p. 6.

<sup>16</sup> Quote from Z. Szlenk, President of the Katyn Society in: *Nasz Dziennik*, 226: 24-25 Oct. 1998.

<sup>17</sup> *Gazeta Wyborcza*, 102: 2-4 May 2003, p. 15.

<sup>18</sup> See: D. M. Gordis, *Jan Paweł II i Żydzi* in: B.L Sherwin, H. Kasimow, *Jan Paweł II i dialog międzyreligijny*, (Kraków, 2001); for the selection of documents and speeches on the subject of dialogue with Judaism see: Jan Paweł II, *Dlaczego dialog z judaizmem?*, (Kraków, 1999).



Unfortunately, the late pope's example has not found followers in all Catholic circles. Despite the fact that *Nasz Dziennik* devotes a lot of space to religious topics, it rarely writes about interfaith dialogue. However, the newspaper does not miss an opportunity to present the Catholic-Jewish dialogue as an initiative exploited by the Jews. In his article Marek Jurek was outraged at the attitude of Jewish religious leaders rejecting the Church's attitude to the Holocaust.<sup>19</sup> Specifically, the author did not approve that the Jews do not perceive the Holocaust as a fruit of neo-paganism, but rather as a result of sixteen centuries of Christianity. He also found offensive the criticism of Pius XII. As I said in the introduction, the interfaith dialogue is a difficult and sometimes even painful process. *Nasz Dziennik* delights in exploiting those difficulties. The newspaper also misrepresents Judaism. A quote from *Midrasz*, Sept. 2001 'Judaism rejects the Catholic stance that contraception is always morally wrong' was interpreted as 'supporting of the killing of unborn children.'<sup>20</sup> According to the author, there is an 'abyss between the Catholic and Jewish values.' Of course the author ensured that the former would be viewed as superior by the reader. On another occasion *Nasz Dziennik* declared Judaism to be a racist religion which promotes contempt towards non-Jews.<sup>21</sup>

*Nasz Dziennik*'s attitude towards the Catholic-Jewish dialogue was summed up in an article by S. Karczewski who in his introduction quoted John Paul II's condemnation of antisemitism as a sin. Karczewski wrote in the context of the pope's confession of guilt of the Church regarding its treatment of the Jews announced on 12 March 2000. The more surprising is the author's statement: 'Christians are constantly encouraged to feel contrition for their past, but when someone suggests something similar to the Jews, he is called an antisemite.'<sup>22</sup> What guilt the Jews should confess the author did not say, but he continues: 'today in Polish reality the difficulties connected to the dialogue with Judaism come not so much from the Christian or Jewish attitudes, but rather from those who at all cost want to be liked by the Jews, ignoring Polish and Catholic sensitivities. There is no lack of people who share or propagate the only right, that is Jewish, point of view.' Karczewski thought that 'in the dialogue Christians cannot give up proclaiming Jesus

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<sup>19</sup> M. Jurek, 'Przywódcy żydowscy odrzucają dokument rzymski o stosunku Kościoła do tragedii holokaustu', *Nasz Dziennik*, 190: 12-13 Sep. 1998, pp. 1, 9.

<sup>20</sup> D. Pawłowiec, 'Judeochrześcijańskie dziedzictwo?', *Nasz Dziennik*, 240: 13-14 Oct. 2001, p. 21.

<sup>21</sup> 'Prokuratura sprawdza żydowskie organizacje', *Nasz Dziennik*, 146: 24 June 2005, p. 7.

<sup>22</sup> S. Karczewski, 'Porozmawiajmy o dialogu?', *Nasz Dziennik*, 14: 17 Jan. 2002, p. 11.



Christ, but they have to carry him wherever he is not yet known. For us Christians the dialogue with Judaism means giving an adequate testimony about Jesus to all of Israel' These words testify how easily the dialogue can evolve into a monologue.

*Nasz Dziennik* is very critical of Catholic circles that work for the dialogue with Judaism: editors of 'Czasy' in TVP1, monthlies *Więź* and *Znak*, but especially *Tygodnik Powszechny* – a progressive Catholic weekly. The last one was branded 'Obłudnik Powszechny [a common deceiver].'<sup>23</sup> In the series of nine essays by Prof. Jerzy Robert Nowak criticised it for 'publishing texts libelling Polishness and Catholicism' and above all for 'supporting such a fraud as Jan Tomasz Gross.'<sup>24</sup> In general *Nasz Dziennik* views dialogue efforts as slanders against Catholics for antisemitism.<sup>25</sup>

Christian religious antisemitism, or as some scholars prefer 'traditional',<sup>26</sup> antisemitism, essentially blames Jews for deicide, killing Jesus, and for not believing in the true God. This blame is attributed collectively and applies even to the Jews today. By 2003 I had not come across this type of antisemitism in *Nasz Dziennik*. In an article summing up my findings in 2003 I ascribed the lack of religious/traditional antisemitism in the newspaper to the *Nostra aetate* and the clear message from pope John Paul II declaring antisemitism to be a grave sin.<sup>27</sup> However, even those two factors were unable to stop the outburst of religious antisemitism that followed *The Passion of the Christ* (2004) controversy.

Mel Gibson's film was criticised by Jewish circles for its stereotypical portrayal of the Jews, more precisely those Jews who did not follow Jesus. On the other hand, some Christians had serious reservations about the film bringing down *sacrum* to the level of *profanum*, especially by reducing the crucifixion and resurrection to a cinematographic effect. Previous representations of the life and death of Jesus were more symbolic and less dramatic. The realism of Gibson's film moved the audience, but for some left too little mystery and space for contemplation. For others, the film became a communion with God as it allowed them to feel that 'they were there' when Jesus died

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<sup>23</sup> *Nasz Dziennik*, Sept.-Dec. 2002.

<sup>24</sup> J. R. Nowak, 'Obłudnik Powszechny', *Nasz Dziennik*, 291: 14-15 Dec. 2002, pp. 20, 21.

<sup>25</sup> C. Bartnik, 'Spór o Kościół "otwarty"', *Nasz Dziennik*, 118: 21-22 May 2005, p. 12.

<sup>26</sup> I. Krzemiński (ed.), *Czy Polacy są antysemitami?*, (Warsaw, 1996), p. 61.

<sup>27</sup> H. Kwiatkowska, 'Conflict between the Image of the Jews and the Self-Image of the Poles in the Light of the Articles Published in *Nasz Dziennik* 1998- 2003', *Scripta Judaica Cracoviensia*, 2 (2003), pp. 89-97.



and rose. This may be seen as a ‘cheap’ effect, even dangerous to true spirituality. After all, it put Jesus next to Batman and other film characters, thus posing a threat that some, especially young viewers could see Jesus as no different from other ‘heroes’. *Nasz Dziennik* ignored those concerns, it also showed a lack of distance towards this production, totally identifying it with the Gospels.<sup>28</sup> Anyone, even priests, who raised criticism about ‘The Passion’ have been marked out as enemies finding pretexts to side with the Jews.

*Nasz Dziennik* and its readers launched a campaign defending *The Passion of the Christ* from Jewish slurs. The film has been called a ‘masterpiece’<sup>29</sup> and was praised for ‘bringing people closer to God’<sup>30</sup> as ‘it was a meeting with the resurrected Christ’.<sup>31</sup> Mel Gibson was hailed as a good Catholic and a genius, while readers were asked to ignore the warnings about the film’s violence and encouraged to go to cinemas as ‘a sign of [their] faith’.<sup>32</sup> Commentators explained that Jews should see this film as one about love as ‘Jesus on the cross prays for the Jewish priests’.<sup>33</sup> The reader was soon informed that ‘those who criticize the film would be also critical towards the Gospels’<sup>34</sup> and after Joaquin Navarro-Valls that ‘if there is antisemitism in the film then also in the Gospels.’<sup>35</sup> Thus, Jews were turned into those who attack the Gospels as the ‘whole campaign against Gibson is in fact launched against Christianity, and the Roman Catholic Church in particular.’<sup>36</sup> In their ‘hysteria’<sup>37</sup> lay liberals and Jews criticised not the film but the Evangelists, in order to ‘diminish the role of the Jews in the death of Jesus and to shed the blame onto the Romans’.<sup>38</sup> In addition, *Nasz Dziennik* revealed that Jews feared a ‘true renaissance of Christian faith in the world that the film could cause.’<sup>39</sup> We also learned that the Jews cannot stand the spiritual growth that *The Passion of the Christ* caused; a priest declared that ‘the film brought him closer to God [...] and for Jews it is a

<sup>28</sup> ‘“Pasja”- filmowa transkrypcja Ewangelii’, *Nasz Dziennik*, 62: 13-14 Mar. 2004, p. 1.

<sup>29</sup> K. Sajdok (reader), ‘Nie rozumieją “Pasji”!’, *Nasz Dziennik*, 111: 13 May 2004, p. 7.

<sup>30</sup> S. Krajski, ‘“Pasja” zbiliży ludzi do Boga’, *Nasz Dziennik*, 42: 19 Feb. 2004, p. 11.

<sup>31</sup> P. Mazur, ‘Nie lękajmy się “Pasji”’, *Nasz Dziennik*, 56: 5 Mar. 2004, p. 1.

<sup>32</sup> S. Krajski, ‘“Pasja”, czyli spotkanie z Chrystusem’, *Nasz Dziennik*, 59: 10 Mar. 2004, p. 11.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid.

<sup>34</sup> J. Kozłowski, ‘Kto boi się “Pasji”?’, *Nasz Dziennik*, 95: 22 Apr. 2004, p. 10.

<sup>35</sup> ‘“Pasja” – filmowa transkrypcja Ewangelii’, *Nasz Dziennik*, 62: 13-14 Mar. 2004, p. 1.

<sup>36</sup> S. Krajski, ‘“Pasja” zbiliży ludzi do Boga’, *Nasz Dziennik*, 42: 19 Feb. 2004, p. 11.

<sup>37</sup> S. Karczewski, ‘Faryzeusze i uczeni w piśmie’, *Nasz Dziennik*, 42: 19 Feb. 2004, p. 16.

<sup>38</sup> R. Połczyński, ‘Prawda w oczu kole’, *Nasz Dziennik*, 40: 17 Feb. 2004, p. 16.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid.



painful fact.’<sup>40</sup> Other writers went even further in their divagations about why Jews oppose the film. P. Mazur claimed that the opposition to the film was so fierce because ‘it forces to stand with or against God.’<sup>41</sup> Thus what follows as a logical conclusion from his words is that Jews oppose the film because they stand against God. The author used a technique of seemingly concealing the message in order to make the reader feel that he is a custodian of the truth that cannot be spelled out. The quotation chosen in the title ‘they will look at the one whom they nailed’ was chosen as a suggestion that today’s Jews are still responsible for the deicide.<sup>42</sup>

As is often the case in *Nasz Dziennik*, the readers picked up the argument about the film and brought it to the next level of antisemitic rhetoric. Protesting against the Jewish opposition of the film a reader referred to ‘satanic questions’ posed by Jews.<sup>43</sup> Another reader described her impression after seeing the film: ‘The shouting Jewish mob in *The Passion* is drunk on cruelty, violence, sadism, revenge and murder. How timely are those pictures from the film.’<sup>44</sup> Jewish cruelty, violence, sadism, revenge and murder are often portrayed on the pages of *Nasz Dziennik*. Whether as a member of the Judenrat, a Stalinist oppressor or an Israeli soldier killing Palestinian children, the Jew is equated with evil. In light of the articles on *The Passion of the Christ* controversy we can say that the myth of a Jew-executioner stems from the religious experience. The current image of the Jew is never far from the ancient one of the Jew blamed for deicide. Though the connection is not openly made, as it was the case in *Nasz Dziennik* until 2004, but such a minor incident as a Hollywood film may bring the old trope back to the centre of the antisemitic polemic.

During the controversy about Gibson’s film *Nasz Dziennik* published articles strengthening the claims that Jews always were and still are enemies of the Christian Church. It has written ‘about the persecutions of the early Church by the Synagogue’<sup>45</sup> and that ‘already at the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century many jews [żydzi] started opposing the

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<sup>40</sup> J. Kozłowski, ‘Kto boi się “Pasji”?’ , *Nasz Dziennik*, 95: 22 Apr. 2004, p. 10.

<sup>41</sup> P. Mazur, ‘Będą patrzeć na Tego, którego przebili’, *Nasz Dziennik*, 53: 5 Mar. 2004, pp. 1, 10.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid.

<sup>43</sup> G. Rostkowiak (reader), ‘Komu służy nagonka na film “Pasja”?’ , *Nasz Dziennik*, 67: 19 Mar. 2004, p. 15.

<sup>44</sup> J. Śledziwska (reader), ‘ “Pasja” Gibsona – “Pasja” Polski’, *Nasz Dziennik*, 125: 29-30 May 2004, p. 31.

<sup>45</sup> A. Hojda, ‘Niuanse stronnictwości’, *Nasz Dziennik*, 46: 24 Feb. 2004, p. 16.



official cross symbolism.’<sup>46</sup> (The use of the small case in the word Jew in Polish is an old spelling denoting only religious affiliation, though *Nasz Dziennik* usually capitalised the word).

A more persistent feature in *Nasz Dziennik* is portraying Judaism as a religion of inferior morality and flawed philosophy. This is very often related to money, depicting Jews as putting money before morals, for example we learned that ‘usury was condemned by the Catholic Church but not by Jews.’<sup>47</sup> The newspaper delighted in exposing the hypocrisy and scandals relating to rabbis, seeing a great sensation in such stories as the one about a ‘rabbi who was selling places in heaven.’<sup>48</sup> Jewish greed and lack of respect for the Pope emerged from a sarcastic article about rabbis demanding return of the golden menorah during their visit to the Vatican.<sup>49</sup> Jews were also depicted as infringing on others’ religious rights. Referring to the report of the US Department of State on violations of the religious freedom around the world *Nasz Dziennik* lamented the plight of ‘non-Jews in Israel discriminated in the access to education, employment and social services.’<sup>50</sup> This made Israel ‘on the par with China and Korea.’ I. C. Pogonowski wrote that ‘Christianity is being marginalized while Judaism is paid homage’ and more specifically that ‘Jews in the US are attacking Christianity’.<sup>51</sup> He was outraged that ‘non-denominational holiday cards replace Christmas cards’ and saw in it ‘a continuation of long-term attempts by Jews to undermine the Christian tradition.’<sup>52</sup> In addition, Jews started propagating, writes Pogonowski, a little known Jewish festival called Chanukah, in a bid to replace Christmas with Chanukah. *Nasz Dziennik* obliged and provided some evidence to confirm that such actions are taking place already in Poland. A photograph of Chanukah lamps in the centre of Warsaw, was interpreted as ‘propaganda to diminish Christmas.’<sup>53</sup>

Other articles, mainly by the priests Bajda and Bartnik, concentrated on denying the Jews the status of God’s chosen nation. ‘Incomprehensible grace shown to Israel

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<sup>46</sup> C. Bartnik, ‘Diabeł “laicki”’, *Nasz Dziennik*, 44: 19 Feb. 2004, p. 21.

<sup>47</sup> ‘Pierwsza droga ekonomii’, *Nasz Dziennik*, 131: 5-6 June 2004, pp. 20-21.

<sup>48</sup> ‘Rajski sprzedawca’, *Nasz Dziennik*, 271: 21 Nov. 2003, p.16

<sup>49</sup> A. Hojda, ‘Bardzo specyficzny dialog’, *Nasz Dziennik*, 16 : 20 Jan. 2004, p. 16.

<sup>50</sup> ‘Lista niemal niezmienna’, *Nasz Dziennik*, 297: 22 Dec. 2003, p. 8

<sup>51</sup> I. C. Pogonowski, ‘Neutralność i marginalizacja chrześcijaństwa’, *Nasz Dziennik*, 303: 2 Jan. 2004, p. 12.

<sup>52</sup> I. C. Pogonowski, ‘Przedświąteczne pranie mózgów w USA’, *Nasz Dziennik*, 294: 16 Dec. 2004, p. 10.

<sup>53</sup> Ibid.



became for it a reason for blasphemy and deicide.’<sup>54</sup> Bartnik noted that ‘only a small percentage of Jews today are faithful to God’<sup>55</sup> and ‘Judaism today is a nationality rather than a religion’,<sup>56</sup> these however were expressions of hope rather than criticism. The author hoped that Poles replace Israel as the great nation (he did not actually use the term ‘chosen’ but in my opinion this is implied in the article).

Until early 2004 *Nasz Dziennik* scorned the Jewish-Catholic dialogue, but religious antisemitism did not feature on its pages. There was a small indication that this form of antisemitism might be supported by the newspaper because it regularly published advertisements of new editions of books by the infamous priest Trzeciak, who in a pseudo-scholarly way attacked the Jews and the Talmud in particular.<sup>57</sup> However, his views were not openly disseminated by *Nasz Dziennik*. The controversy which erupted after *The Passion of the Christ* and all the articles attacking Jews and Judaism recalling traditional religious antisemitism showed that it was never far from the surface. The imagery of the Jew as an executioner so present in the articles on history and on current affairs in Israel, while not referring explicitly to religion, stemmed from those antisemitic religious views.

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<sup>54</sup> J. Bajda, ‘Zagrożona suwerenność’, *Nasz Dziennik*, 107: 8-9 May 2004, pp. 16-17.

<sup>55</sup> C. Bartnik, ‘Religijna sytuacja światowa’, *Nasz Dziennik*, 244: 16-17 Oct. 2004, pp. 18-19.

<sup>56</sup> C. Bartnik, ‘Co Chrześcijaństwo dało Europie?’, *Nasz Dziennik*, 244: 16-17 Oct. 2004, pp. 18-19.

<sup>57</sup> S. Trzeciak, *Talmud o gojach a kwestia żydowska w Polsce*, (Warsaw, 1939); recently reprinted by Dom Wydawniczy “Ostoja”, Krzeszowice.



## Chapter XI

### Politics

*Nasz Dziennik*'s political leanings and influences.

Antisemitism has been frequently exploited in Polish political life. At the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century National Democrats (*Endecja*) attracted support with their populist views which were discriminatory towards all minorities and towards the Jews in particular.<sup>1</sup> Following Marshal Piłsudski's death in 1935 the policies advocated by the *Endecja* were taken up even by less right-wing politicians; by 1938 the Camp of National Unity (OZON) began drafting anti-Jewish laws such as a ban on ritual slaughter.<sup>2</sup> Even when Jews suffered imminent annihilation during the Nazi occupation, the nationalistic clandestine press deliberated over the Jewish question.<sup>3</sup> Then again in 1968 a group of nationalists in the Communist party used antisemitic slogans to get rid of their opponents in the higher ranks of the party. This move was successful because the 'working masses' resonated with antisemitic arguments.<sup>4</sup>

However, from 1989 to 2001, antisemitism did not form a part of electoral slogans or of a party's programme, although rumours about Tadeusz Mazowiecki's Jewish origin, in the opinion of many publicists, jeopardised his chances in the presidential elections. On 29 July 1990, during the presidential campaign, Lech Wałęsa demanded that people of Jewish origin should not hide it. However, the rumours were part of a dirty campaign, not of a programme or ideology of any party. Nevertheless, this precedent of the use of antisemitism in politics was very damaging for the young Polish

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<sup>1</sup> R. Wapiński, *Narodowa Demokracja, 1893-1939*, (Wrocław, 1980).

<sup>2</sup> A. Polonsky, *Politics in Independent Poland: The Crisis of Constitutional Government*, (Oxford, 1972); A. Polonsky, E. Mendelsohn and J. Tomaszewski (eds.), *Jews in independent Poland, 1918-1939*, *Polin*, 8 (1994); W. W. Hagen, 'Before the "Final Solution": Toward a Comparative Analysis of Political Anti-Semitism in Interwar Germany and Poland', *Journal of Modern History*, 68/2 (June 1996), pp. 351-381.

<sup>3</sup> J. B. Michlic, *Poland's Threatening Other: the Image of the Jew from 1880 to the Present*, (Lincoln and London, 2006), p. 163; D. Stola, 'The Polish government-in-exile and the Final Solution: what conditioned its actions and inactions?' in J. Zimmerman (ed.), *Contested memories...*, pp. 85-96.

<sup>4</sup> J. Schatz, 'The Riddle of Radical Jews' in *The Generation. The Rise and Fall of the Jewish Communists of Poland*, (Berkeley and Oxford, 1991), W. Jedlicki, 'Chamy i Żydy', (Paris, 1962), M. Zaremba, *Komunizm, legitymizacja, nacjonalizm. Nacjonalistyczna legitymizacja władzy komunistycznej w Polsce*, (Warsaw, 2001).



democracy as it showed that in Poland one can destroy political enemies by bowing to primitive stereotypes rather than by having a constructive debate.

Parliamentary elections in September 2001 turned around the political arena. Unia Wolności (Freedom Union), perceived as the intelligentsia's party, for the first time did not make it into the Parliament. Samoobrona (Self-Defence), a populist party, celebrated triumphantly its first electoral success as it received the support of those who felt disillusioned with the reforms of the outgoing government. The electoral campaign was dominated by negative emotions. Jews became one of the attacked groups in the campaign. The regional state television, TV3, screened electoral advertisements of the LPR (League of Polish Families) showing the Jedwabne murder commemorations with special attention drawn to president Aleksander Kwaśniewski wearing a skull cap. In the commentary, the leader of LPR, Roman Giertych, tried to convince the Poles that those celebrations in Jedwabne were aimed to falsify history. For the first time in the new political reality in Poland materials of negative attitude towards a minority were used in an electoral campaign. It also marked a step back for the Polish democracy that had been born in the spirit of solidarity and pluralism.

*Nasz Dziennik* was launched to take a greater part in political life than Radio Maryja, whose charter defined it mainly as a religious radio station with clear obligations. Despite its broadcast charter the Radio risked criticism and loss of transmission agreement with its heavily politicised programmes. In 1995 the Radio got involved in the presidential elections and broadcast allegations that one of the candidates, Hanna Gronkiewicz-Waltz, was Jewish. In 1997, thanks to the support of the Radio, Akcja Wyborcza Solidarność (AWS) was elected to the Parliament.<sup>5</sup> In the 2000 presidential elections Father T. Rydzyk urged listeners to vote for Marian Krzaklewski and negotiated with other right-wing candidates to withdraw from the elections. In 2001 it was reported by the media that it was Father Rydzyk who succeeded in leading LPR into the Parliament.<sup>6</sup>

Similarly to Radio Maryja, *Nasz Dziennik* gives its readers clear directives as to for whom 'a real Pole and Catholic' should vote. Before the presidential elections in 2000

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<sup>5</sup> A. L. Sowa, *Od Drugiej do Trzeciej Rzeczypospolitej 1945-2001*, in *Wielka Historia Polski*, Vol. X, (Kraków, 2001), p. 343ff.

<sup>6</sup> *Rzeczpospolita*, 275: 26 Nov. 2002, p. A6.



Father Czesław S. Bartnik instructed the readers that they must not vote for a candidate who: ‘acts against Radio Maryja, the Church, the Papacy and Poland’s sovereignty, who is a freemason or someone from SLD (Sojusz Lewicy Demokratycznej [Democratic Left Alliance]).’<sup>7</sup> If the reader was still unclear whom Bartnik had in mind the article was illustrated by the photographs of M. Siwiec and A. Kwaśniewski wearing skull caps, the same photographs that were used in the negative campaign engineered by M. Krzaklewski’s headquarters. The same author before the parliamentary elections in 2001 warned about ‘the pan-European ideological front, dominated by freemasons [...] and the “new left” [...] attracting thinkers mainly of Jewish origin’. Bartnik continued:

Our leading politicians, linked to the Western freemasons and social democrats, are given control in order to prevent the Polish and Catholic element from gaining importance in the parliamentary elections. This is why some parties were forced [to accept] the false leaders. Sometimes so called right-wing activists were corrupted. If the Catholic and patriotic parties are doing well in a popularity survey, they “have to” be immediately divided, for example if someone is a secret freemason he has to admit to it, so other groups would leave him. The honest and able right-wing activists become dependent on the financial help from the Batory Foundation.<sup>8</sup> Various nets are being set for the weak Catholic media, Radio Maryja is being constantly attacked in Poland and in the world [...].<sup>9</sup>

In short, freemasons and Jews were blamed for the inner divisions of the political right. Further Bartnik criticised AWS, in the Jedwabne case context, for ‘anti-Polish silence in the face of accusations made by the Jews, degrading us in the entire world’. In other words AWS was expected to deny Polish responsibility for the massacre. In case of any further doubts regarding who to vote for, the reader was instructed to seek the advice of his ‘parish priests’.

However, *Nasz Dziennik* ensured that its readers would have no doubts who to elect. It published exclusively electoral advertisements of LPR which often took up whole pages of the newspaper. This leads us to the question why Father Rydzyk helped to

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<sup>7</sup> C. Bartnik, ‘Czy i jak głosować na prezydenta’, *Nasz Dziennik*, 229: 1 Sept. 2000, p. 13.

<sup>8</sup> Foundation promoting the values of the Open Society set up by the Jewish financier and philanthropist – George Soros.

<sup>9</sup> C. Bartnik, ‘Ojczyzny wolność racz ratować, Panie!’, *Nasz Dziennik*, 205: 3 Sept. 2001, p. 10.



create LPR and consequently why did *Nasz Dziennik* and Radio Maryja support the party during the elections?

The League of Polish Families was launched as a political hybrid as puzzling as its name, taken from one of the smaller and less known parties forming the LPR coalition. We cannot miss the similarity between the LPR's name and that of the organisation called Families of Radio Maryja. Although not all of the founders of LPR were close to Father Rydzyk, the name of the party has been a clear signal sent to the electorate of the Radio's listeners, indicating closeness of values and visions for Poland's future. In addition, the name did not immediately place the new party on the political compass. This also can be seen as a deliberate move, aimed at appealing to the widest possible electorate, both from the left and right. The party always insisted it was a centre one and opposed the 'libels' identifying it as right-wing extremist even after it entered Parliament. Also, its campaign in 2001 concentrating on 'defending the respectable life of Polish families' with all its lack of concrete plans meant to appeal to a large audience.

The politicians who formed LPR seemed to have very little in common except a strong drive to be elected.<sup>10</sup> This was confirmed shortly after the elections, when the party was clearly divided and more established politicians such as Jan Olszewski decided to leave its quarters. Despite the lack of ideological coherence LPR had an ambitious start and chose very successfully its electoral niche. The party was supported by 8% of the electorate in 2001, mainly because LPR became an alternative for those who feared the Polish accession to the EU. Until LPR came to the political arena, the idea that Poland could stay out of the EU was not seriously debated. When Poland regained her freedom, Polish society viewed accession to the EU as something that the world owed the Poles, a compensation for the Nazi occupation, Communism, the martial state and poverty. As time passed and Poland was still not in the EU, public opinion understood that the accession meant effort, sacrifice and compromises. Thus, the initial, uncritical enthusiasm was slowly lost, however the EU continued to be viewed as the only way for Poland's

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<sup>10</sup> *Gazeta Wyborcza*, 228: 29-30 Sept. 2001, pp. 16, 17.



secure future.<sup>11</sup> LPR rejected the idea that Poland must join the EU and stimulated the debate, often calling on simple demagogy and raising hostility towards the foreigners.

The party's success in the parliamentary elections was followed by an even greater one in the regional elections in November 2002 when LPR gained 14.5% of the votes, which meant an 85% increase of support. Such success of LPR would not be possible without the support of *Nasz Dziennik* and Radio Maryja. However, one must remember that the support of these media, or rather of Father Rydzyk, does not come for free. Also, as AWS learnt, Father Rydzyk can withdraw his support with all the consequences for the party.

LPR, with all its opposition against the EU, spoke in unity with *Nasz Dziennik*. The newspaper's anti-EU campaign grew as the date of the referendum approached. In November 2002 it published a series of articles by Carl Bredderman, former EU adviser in Poland, urging Poles not to join the EU.<sup>12</sup> The debate about the EU accession in *Nasz Dziennik* was more emotional and ideological rather than specific. In many respects it reflected the mainstream debate where pro-Europeans presented a picture of progress, prosperity and great perspectives for the young. Other arguments in favour were Poland's economic and international security. At the time when Poland was deciding to join the EU it was already apparent that the EU as the land of generous subsidies for the farmers was a thing of the past. The young and educated who faced a lack of job opportunities in Poland looked to the opening of the job markets in a few of the EU member states. The older voters reasoned that although they would not benefit from joining the EU their grandchildren or even children might. It was more the vote of resignation when facing economic crisis in Poland rather than that of confidence in the EU. To counter those opinions (and they were not very firmly established until the very day of the referendum)

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<sup>11</sup> For analysis of the role played by *Gazeta Wyborcza* in the construction of Polish national and European identities, see: I. Krzemiński, 'The national Identity and European Consciousness of Poles', in: P. Drulák, (ed.), *National and European Identities in EU Enlargement. Views from Central and Eastern Europe*, (Prague, 2001), pp. 57-69.

<sup>12</sup> C. Breddermann, 'Nie wchodźcie do Unii....', series of articles in Nov. 2002, the arguments put forward by Breddermann have been quoted in many articles on the EU and his catastrophic visions about the imminent end of the EU continued to be published even when Poland joined the Union. In short, according to Breddermann the EU is a 'paper tiger' suffocated by Brussels' bureaucracy that implements utopian idea about the big European family instead of building Europe of Nations. The European constitution with its voting system will block Polish integrity and freedom. See also: C. Breddermann, 'Unia Europejska – dinozaur czekający na dobiecie?', *Nasz Dziennik*, 199: 25 Aug. 2004, p. 12.



*Nasz Dziennik* counter-attacked with visions of Poland in financial ruin. The newspaper's ideologues, especially Father J. Bajda, argued that Poland would put more into the coffers of the EU than it would be able to beg from it in subsidies. The country would be flooded by foreign products and capital that would completely eradicate the local Polish industry and trade. Along with the financial ruin *Nasz Dziennik* predicted that the EU would bring moral distraction; young people would be exposed and dragged into all sorts of evils such as abortion, homosexual relations, paedophilia and sodomy. In the month preceding the accession referendum *Nasz Dziennik*'s tone became hysterical; Poland was going to be: 'annexed' to the EU, 'given away for nothing mainly to the Jews'<sup>13</sup>, partitioned again and above all 'it will never be fully ours'.<sup>14</sup> Above all *Nasz Dziennik* tried to convince its readers that the godless EU would challenge the dearest Polish values – the Roman Catholic ethos and morality. The latter argument was supposed to be strengthened by claims that the EU is ruled by Jews and freemasons.<sup>15</sup>

The MPs from LPR and *Nasz Dziennik* campaigned for legislation on privatisation and against 'buying out of the Polish land by foreigners'.<sup>16</sup> Another common point between the newspaper and the party is their shared Catholic values despite the fact that the Church does not recognise them as official Catholic voices. Although some Church officials welcomed the input and Catholic agenda of the party and the newspaper, others feared that they might hijack the official voice of the Polish Church. Also, the association of nationalistic ideology with the Catholic Church was seen by some as very damaging for the universal appeal of the Church. On the other hand, on such issues as abortion, contraception and ethics relating to sexuality, the Church found great allies in LPR and *Nasz Dziennik*. However, on the issue of the EU accession, the Polish Episcopate made it clear that the Church puts its universal ethos above national interests and supported the accession. This stance, and also that of the Vatican, arguably swung public opinion to vote for the EU.

LPR and *Nasz Dziennik* share a hostile outlook on foreigners and minorities and are keen to look for conspiracies and freemason networks. *Nasz Dziennik* supported J.

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<sup>13</sup> C. Bartnik, 'Przerabianie stypy za wesele...', *Nasz Dziennik*, 97: 24-24 Apr. 2004, pp. 18-19.

<sup>14</sup> S. Krajski, 'Jeszcze Polska nie zginęła!', *Nasz Dziennik*, 102: 30 Apr.-3 May 2004, p. 20.

<sup>15</sup> J. Bajda, 'Komu Pan Bóg przeszkadza', *Nasz Dziennik*, 130: 5 June 2003, pp. 15-16.

<sup>16</sup> See: D. Pawłowiec, 'Uklon w stronę separatystów', *Nasz Dziennik*, 40: 16-17 Feb. 2002, p. 3; A. Adamiec, 'Ustawa dla mniejszości pogłębi podziały', *Nasz Dziennik*, 58: 9-10 Mar. 2002, p. 22.



Czerwiński (MP from LPR) of the parliamentary committee for the minorities, who regarding the national census, appealed to ‘forbid any declarations of belonging to [minority] ethnic groups’.<sup>17</sup> This was dictated by fears that the minorities would demand greater privileges with subsequent damage to the Polish state and nation. The newspaper published speeches of LPR’s MPs regarding the Jedwabne massacre (see chapter IV: Jedwabne). In addition some statements made by LPR’s politicians could serve as credo of *Nasz Dziennik*’s publicists: ‘I am not an antisemite, I only fight anti-Polonism. I am not an enemy of the Jews or Judeo-Communism. No one should hide his nationality and membership in secret international organisations’ (Zygmunt Wrzodak, MP, LPR).<sup>18</sup>

*Nasz Dziennik* showed great admiration and sympathy for the Giertych dynasty, a family with strong nationalistic, some would say fascist, roots who came to public attention with the launch of LPR. The newspaper wrote about Jędrzej Giertych (1903-1992) right-wing activist, publicist and ideologue.<sup>19</sup> We can see many similarities between the publications of *Nasz Dziennik* and those by Professor Maciej Giertych (db. 1936) son of Jędrzej, leader of Stronnictwo Narodowe<sup>20</sup> (the National Party, SN), an MP for LPR and since 2004 a member of the European Parliament. He is also a prolific writer, a creationist and a Radio Maryja publicist. Maciej Giertych in the SN’s publication *Opoka w Kraju*<sup>21</sup> and numerous publications<sup>22</sup> ‘exposes’ various Jewish-freemason conspiracies, which he sees in the EU, World Bank, International Monetary Fund, Rotary Club, YMCA and the Batory Foundation, to name a few. Similarly *Nasz Dziennik* writes about freemasons, a word which serves as a synonym for Jews in the nationalistic press. Stanisław Krajski, the newspaper’s specialist in this area, wrote about

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<sup>17</sup> *Nasz Dziennik*, 119: 23 May 2002, p. 1.

<sup>18</sup> M. Lizut, ‘Ojciec Rydzyk nie kocha dzieci swoich’, *Gazeta Wyborcza*, 28: 2-3 Feb. 2002, p. 15.

<sup>19</sup> P. Sosiński, ‘Pochwała drogi wierności’, *Nasz Dziennik*, 270: 19 Nov. 1999, p. 13.

<sup>20</sup> See: G. Tokarz, *Ruch narodowy w Polsce w latach 1989-1997*, (Wrocław, 2002), p.13ff.

<sup>21</sup> *Opoka w Kraju* is published on <http://www.ciemnogrod.net/owk/> In addition, the publication is sent out electronically for free to anyone who subscribes and to all Polish bishops. The editor encourages everyone to disseminate articles by any means.

<sup>22</sup> See: M. Giertych, *Nie przemoga!- Antykościół, antypolonizm, masoneria*, (Wrocław, 1997); *Z nadzieją w przyszłość*, (Warsaw, 2005). In Feb. 2007 Giertych caused an international stir after he published a pamphlet in Polish and English entitled ‘Civilizations at war in Europe’ in which he suggested that Jews are unethical and have themselves to blame for creating their own ghettos (the pamphlet was freely distributed on his website). Later Giertych defended accusations of promoting antisemitism saying that he merely quoted Feliks Koneczny.



the YMCA, freemasons<sup>23</sup> and the modern freemasonry of Europe that is the Rotary club.<sup>24</sup> Writing about George Soros he compared freemasonry to a ‘deceitful devil’ and pointed out that ‘freemasons are spiritually related to the Jew’.<sup>25</sup> The Batory Foundation has been a target of many attacks by *Nasz Dziennik* for ‘supporting the growth of homosexuality in Poland’<sup>26</sup> and for ‘opening up towards evil’.<sup>27</sup> Krajski saw the idea of the Open Society as serving ‘the European Jewish minority so everywhere in Europe it will feel like those who inhabit those lands for generations.’<sup>28</sup> Clearly *Nasz Dziennik* cannot accept such ‘comfort’ enjoyed by the Jews. More generally *Nasz Dziennik* constantly unveils Jewish conspiracies and blames the Jews for globalization – that is ‘modern international slavery created by corporations which are dependent on Jewish money’.<sup>29</sup> In addition, *Nasz Dziennik* shares with M. Giertych admiration for Feliks Koneczny.<sup>30</sup> It was thanks to Giertych that his forgotten works on history and politics have been re-printed. *Nasz Dziennik* eagerly publicized them and encouraged its readers to read the works of this ‘forgotten genius’.<sup>31</sup>

However, the doors to mainstream politics were opened for M. Giertych not by his views which were shared by *Nasz Dziennik*, but his son’s Roman’s political skills and determination to reach out to the people with the nationalistic message, without frightening them by extremism. Roman Giertych (db.1971) started his political career in

<sup>23</sup> S. Krajski, ‘YMCA i masoneria’, *Nasz Dziennik*, 30: 5-6 Feb. 2000, p. 12.

<sup>24</sup> W. Wybranowski, ‘Masoneria nowoczesnej Europy’, *Nasz Dziennik*, 42: 19-20 Feb. 2000, p. 12.

<sup>25</sup> S. Krajski, ‘Czy masoneria zmienia swoją taktykę?’, *Nasz Dziennik*, 110: 12 May 2000, p.13.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid. Unfortunately in this work I could not devote much attention to the homophobic discourse in *Nasz Dziennik*. This issue has been recently researched by R. Duluk and R. Rudnicki in *Homoseksualizm i homoseksualiści w dyskursie „Naszego Dziennika” i „Niedzieli”. Czy mowa nienawiści?* (manuscript). I am in debt to Professor Ireneusz Krzemiński for providing me with this work. With the stronger position of the right-wing parties on the political scene whose politicians are openly homophobic it is not surprising that *Nasz Dziennik* increased the attacks on this minority. Another factor is also that gays and lesbians in Poland start launching more open activism for their rights which takes form of pride parades, happenings and exhibitions. *Nasz Dziennik* is very alarmist about the ‘deviation’ and ‘plague of homosexuality’ and sees it as promoting ‘civilisation of death’ see: B. Andrzejewska, ‘Kolejna ofensywa homoseksualistów’, *Nasz Dziennik*, 115: 18 May 2005, p. 3; S. Krajski, ‘Homoseksualizm jest dewiacją’, *Nasz Dziennik*, 140: 18-19 June 2005, p. 20; A. Lewandowicz, ‘Homoseksualizm – wykwit cywilizacji śmierci’, *Nasz Dziennik*, 58: 9 Mar. 2007, pp. 12-13.

<sup>27</sup> S. Krajski, ‘Fundacja Batorego – otwieranie na zło’, *Nasz Dziennik* 305: 31 Dec. 1999-2 Jan. 2000, pp. 14-15.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid.

<sup>29</sup> I. C. Pogonowski, ‘Zniewolenia krajów i ludzi’, *Nasz Dziennik*, 174: 27 July 2005, p. 11.

<sup>30</sup> Feliks Koneczny one of the ideologues of the Endecja.

<sup>31</sup> ‘Czytajmy Konecznego’, *Nasz Dziennik*, 229: 1 Oct. 2002, p. 9.; ‘Prof. Feliks Koneczny – zapomniany geniusz’, *Nasz Dziennik*, 38: 13 Feb. 1999, p. 1.



1989 by reactivating the pre-war *Endecja*'s youth organization Młodzież Wszechpolska (MW, All Polish Youth), infamous for its attacks, often violent both verbally and physically, on homosexuals and feminists or anyone who cares to defend the rights of those minorities. The organisation is also known for spreading antisemitic messages. Giertych has never distanced himself or his political youth movement from the pre-war ideology of Młodzież Wszechpolska. The lack of condemnation of fascist ideas that MW proclaimed before the war and of its violent attacks on Jews is very telling. So are the close contacts of MW's milieu with the neo-Nazi organisations; in fact leaders of MD are not hiding the fact that many of its activists come from skin-head organisations. Roman Giertych remained MW's honorary president and during the 2001 elections thanks to its support had strong and energetic headquarters. He also used the organisation very efficiently in the EU referendum. With the hindsight some may say unsuccessfully, but I would argue that it showed the power of the organisation, which seriously threatened the positive outcome of the referendum to the very last day. In his first public appearances Roman Giertych presented himself as a person caring about Poland and her citizens, especially the young ones. Among his young supporters he enjoys a personality cult similar to that of Roman Dmowski before the war. Before the 2005 elections Giertych rejuvenated LPR by inviting many of the MW's activists to run in the elections, especially those who got their first political credentials as local councillors. Today 20 and 30-year olds ideologically formed by MW's nationalistic ethos decide about important issues at various levels of Poland's regional and national government. Some of them, especially more independent ones who helped to set up the movement, now strengthen not just LPR but other right-wing parties, but still they remain faithful to the nationalistic ethos.<sup>32</sup> This new generation of politically active nationalists ended the dreams and predictions that Poland's political life would be finally free from dangerous chauvinisms.

In 2005 LPR gained 7.9 % of votes and 34 seats in the Parliament (Sejm).<sup>33</sup> Soon after it formed a coalition with the winning Prawo i Sprawiedliwość (PiS, Law and

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<sup>32</sup> See: M. Kornak, 'Młodzież Wszechpolska u władzy' in the issue of *Midrasz* devoted to MD: 'Polska wszechpolska', *Midrasz*, 6 (June 2006), pp. 24-28. See also: publications of an NGO Never Again fighting racism and antisemitism on [www.nigdywiecej.org](http://www.nigdywiecej.org). After LPR failed in the Oct. 2007 elections MW faces divisions, possible radicalisation or even disappearing from the political scene, whatever the final outcome its legacy will be felt for years to come in the 'patriotic' milieu.

<sup>33</sup> National Electoral Commission report on the election to the Sejm on 25 Sept. 2005, see: <http://www.wybory2005.pkw.gov.pl/SJM/PL/WYN/M/index.htm>.



Order) and Samoobrona. Roman Giertych's position on the political scene sky-rocketed as he became the Minister for Education and the Deputy Prime Minister. This appointment resulted in mass protests by Polish students.<sup>34</sup> One of the ideas of the new minister was to introduce a new compulsory subject at schools – patriotism education.<sup>35</sup> He also removed, among other authors, Kafka, Gombrowicz and Dostoyevsky, from the set reading list for high school pupils. According to Giertych their works are not compatible with his educational programme that will provide foundation for Polish patriots with strong moral values. Another LPR parliamentarian demanded that the grade for Religious Studies be counted into the grade average that is taken into account when applying to universities.<sup>36</sup> It has to be pointed out that Roman Catholic beliefs are the only ones presented in Religious Studies and the subject is not regulated by any official state curriculum and is taught by priests or lay Catholics. Another member of LPR advocated establishing a database with all organisations and individuals whose actions threaten Polish identity.<sup>37</sup> A close ally of Giertych from LPR, Piotr Farfał, was nominated as vice-executive of the state television. Soon media investigations revealed that he used to be involved in the neo-Nazi movement and wrote vicious antisemitic articles in the late 1990s.<sup>38</sup> A LPR councillor from Gdańsk, Grzegorz Sielatycki, in an article from 1998, was quoted as demanding to cleanse Polish literature from the Jews (although he denied the reports).<sup>39</sup>

The list of LPR's ideas is long and no doubt some of them may be implemented. The presence of this party in the government unleashed into public life all sorts of phobias. One incident, fiercely denied by the person concerned but reported widely by the media, illustrated best the current atmosphere in Polish politics. Jacek Kurski, PiS's MP and media expert who is very close to PM Jarosław Kaczyński, allegedly was accused by some LPR politicians of being a Jew.<sup>40</sup> To defend himself Kurski took off his

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<sup>34</sup> S. Sierakowski, A. Zandberg, 'Jak walczyć z Giertychem', *Gazeta Wyborcza*, 125: 31 May 2006, p. 21.

<sup>35</sup> P. Pacewicz, 'Goming out Giertycha', *Gazeta Wyborcza*, 135: 10 June 2006, p. 2.

<sup>36</sup> M. Kula, 'LPR: ocean z religji wliczna do średniej', *Gazeta Wyborcza*, 15: 18 Jan. 2006, p. 4.

<sup>37</sup> P. Jedlecki, 'LPR: tworzy listę przeciwników Polski', *Gazeta Wyborcza*, 65: 16 Mar. 2006, p. 4.

<sup>38</sup> M. Kowalski, 'Były neonazista w TVP', *Gazeta Wyborcza*, 142: 20 June 2006, p. 1; M. Kowalski, W. Szacki, 'Wiceprezes TVP pisał też dla "Szczerbca"', *Gazeta Wyborcza*, 147: 26 June 2006, p. 2.

<sup>39</sup> K. Włodkowska, 'Antysemita od Giertycha (Radny LPR chciał "odżydzenia" polskiej literatury)', *Gazeta Wyborcza Gdańsk*, 166: 18 July 2006, p. 2.

<sup>40</sup> K. Kolenda-Zaleska, 'Powrót antysemityzmu?', *Gazeta Wyborcza*, 67: 19 Mar. 2006, p. 24.



pants to disprove the accusations... Later Kurski fiercely denied that the event took place and suggested that it was Roman Giertych himself who fabricated the whole story and leaked it to *Newsweek*.<sup>41</sup> Since 1989 Poles have seen many acrimonious incidents in the political life of their country, but since the nationalists and their discourse of hatred entered the Parliament the standards of the political debate has reached gutter levels. However, before the populists from PiS and Samoobrona and nationalists from LPR got elected, their homophobic, racist and misogynistic views were made acceptable by their presence in the media. *Nasz Dziennik* and Radio Maryja defined the views of this part of the electorate that was vulnerable, disillusioned and accustomed to vote intuitively, rather than with political convictions. Today this group is mockingly called ‘woolly hats’, but they altered the history of the young Polish democracy. Or as some prefer, they pushed Poland away from the building of a civil society based on mutual respect. The electorate of the populists may be old, however, especially in case of LPR, its political base is very young and leaning towards extremism. Some commentators think that LPR will face a substantial fall in electorate support in the next elections, others even see it as a ‘descending party’ that will not make it into Parliament next time. However, even if those predictions will come true, we can expect that LPR’s politicians will reappear in other parties – something which is a usual event in Polish politics especially among the conservative and right-wing parties. Also, other parties, PiS in particular, started fighting for LPR’s electorate, using chauvinistic rhetoric. This suggests that the language of prejudice and nationalism will not disappear soon from the Polish Parliament.

During the presidential electoral campaign in October 2005 *Nasz Dziennik* and Radio Maryja supported PiS’s candidate – Lech Kaczyński and fiercely attacked the liberal candidate Donald Tusk. When elected as president Kaczyński remembered to show Father Rydzyk his gratitude by accepting an invitation to TV TRWAM for one of his first public appearances in his new role. Earlier when fighting for Radio’s electorate the twin brother Jarosław Kaczyński even declared that ‘an attack on Radio Maryja is an attack on freedom’.<sup>42</sup> The extent of power of Rydzyk’s media to influence politics and

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<sup>41</sup> M. Sandecki, K. Katka, ‘Afera rozporkowa: Kurski oskarża Giertycha’, *Gazeta Wyborcza Gdańsk*, 63: 15 Mar. 2006, p. 9.

<sup>42</sup> Press conference in Gdynia 30 Apr. 2006, see: ‘Dziękczynienie za 15 lat Radia Maryja’, *Nasz Dziennik*, 287: 7 Dec. 2006, pp. 13-20.



politicians who rely on the votes of his audience was fully seen during the ‘Rydzek’s tapes controversy’. In a lecture to students at the Media School he founded, Rydzek called president’s wife a ‘witch’ who should consider euthanasia.<sup>43</sup> This was after Maria Kaczyńska met with a group of influential Polish women who opposed constitutional changes that would make the already strict anti-abortion law even more severe.<sup>44</sup> The sheepish reaction of the president’s representatives stunned many commentators, Kaczyński clearly was not prepared to confront Rydzek and preferred to wait until the affair stopped attracting headlines.<sup>45</sup> This has proven to be a good strategy as PiS needed the support of Rydzek’s audience in the forthcoming elections in autumn 2007.<sup>46</sup> Infamous Rydzek’s tapes yet again revealed Father Director’s antisemitic views as he claimed that Poland is being ruled by the Jewish financier, George Soros. However, Rydzek’s antisemitism was marginal in the controversy as media and public opinion became immunised to such poisonous speech. Ironically, in December 2007 Rydzek toned down antisemitic content in the Radio Maryja broadcasts in order to secure the EU funding for his media school – the ‘Jews’ were replaced by the new code-word the ‘rich’.

The nationalistic agenda is no longer proclaimed by some lone voices or printed in only hundreds of copies of amateur leaflets; it is advocated by powerful media and from parliamentary tribunes. The situation over the past decade is reminiscent of the interwar Poland when *Endecja* became not just a party but a ‘clearly defined moral-political movement powerful throughout Poland’.<sup>47</sup> One more striking parallel is that *Endecja* had a powerful media supporter – *Mały Dziennik*, the most popular national daily.

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<sup>43</sup> M. Dzierżanowski, ‘Sługa burzy’, *Wprost*, 29: 22 July 2007, pp. 28-29.

<sup>44</sup> The proposed changes to protect human life from conception to natural death would mean that even victims of rape or women whose health and life is in danger would not have access to legal abortion.

<sup>45</sup> K. Wiśniewska, ‘Rydzek nie przepasza, a prokuratura nie wszczyna’, *Gazeta Wyborcza*, 162: 13 July 2007, p. 6.

<sup>46</sup> Although PiS did not win the Oct. 2007 elections (it came second with 32,1% of votes) it remains a significant power on the political scene. Father Rydzek publicly mourned the electoral defeat. This association of his media with a more mainstream right-wing party strengthens his position. It also yet again reveals his opportunism, after all Rydzek put a bet on the strongest horse in the race. LPR which was his favourite in the previous elections, did not make it to Parliament with only 1,3%, its electorate voted for PiS instead, as yet again it responded to an intensive campaign in Rydzek’s media.

<sup>47</sup> W. Feldman, *Rzecz o narodowej demokracji* (Kraków, 1992), p. 4.



## Chapter XII

*Mały Dziennik*<sup>1</sup> as an ideological predecessor of *Nasz Dziennik*.

The ideology presented in *Nasz Dziennik* is strongly rooted in the Polish nationalism that sprouted in the 19<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>2</sup> It is also often seen by commentators<sup>3</sup> as continuing the works of the pre-war *Mały Dziennik* – a daily published between 1935-1939 established by Maximilian Kolbe with a circulation of 100,000-120,000 in December 1935, which reached even 300,000 copies in 1939. The newspaper did not represent a high level of journalism and was infamous for its antisemitic articles. In the promotional materials it advertised itself as ‘using healthy sensation’. Though before World War II there were plenty of right-wing newspapers on the Polish publishing market which fiercely attacked the Jews (*Pro Christo*, *Głos Narodu*, or local newspapers such as *Słowo Pomorskie*, *Kurier Poznański* to name a few).<sup>4</sup> *Mały Dziennik* stood out as an innovative publication – an affordable daily for the masses that was thoroughly modern for its times and presented a nationalistic outlook on Poland’s and world affairs. Priced only at 5 groszy it was the cheapest national daily, a fact that greatly contributed to its popularity as the economy declined in the late 1930s. The newspaper was able to keep a competitive price, about a half of that of other dailies, because all its printing work was done by Franciscan monks in Niepokalanów as part of their monastic life. What also

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<sup>1</sup> I was able to use microfilms of *Mały Dziennik* 1935-1939 thanks to a generous grant from the London University Central Research Fund.

<sup>2</sup> For a very comprehensive outline of the origins of ethno-nationalism in Poland see: Joanna B. Michlic, *Poland’s Threatening Other: the Image of the Jew from 1880 to the Present*, (Lincoln and London, 2006).

<sup>3</sup> Dawid Warszawski (aka Konstanty Gebert), ‘Zatrute źródło’, *Gazeta Wyborcza*, 190: 16-17 Aug. 2003, pp. 16-18.

<sup>4</sup> In 1927 in Poland 131 Catholic periodicals were published, in 1937 the number rose to 228 with an average circulation of 5-10,000. The monthly *Rycerz Niepokalanej* was the most popular with a circulation 200,000, which in late 1930s reached 700,000 copies. See: R. Modras, *Kościół katolicki i antysemityzm w Polsce w latach 1933-1939*, (Kraków, 2004), p. 62. For general information on the publishing market in Poland before the war see: A. Paczkowski, *Prasa Polska 1918-1939*, (Warsaw, 1980). For more specific information on nationalistic press of that period see: A. Landau-Czajka, *W jednym stali domu: Koncepcje rozwiązania kwestii żydowskiej w publicystyce polskiej lat 1933-1939*, (Warsaw, 1998); B. Halczak, *Publicystyka narodowo-demokratyczna wobec problemów narodowościowych i etnicznych II Rzeczypospolitej*, (Zielona Góra, 2000); O. Bergman, *Narodowa Demokracja wobec problematyki żydowskiej w latach 1918-1927*, (Poznań, 1998). For a critical review of Bergman see: S. Rudnicki in *Polin* 14 (2001). See also: N. Aleksun, ‘The Polish Catholic Church and the Jewish Question in Poland, 1944-1948’, *Yad Vashem Studies*, XXXIII (2005), pp. 143-171.



distinguished *Mały Dziennik* was a very coherent programme to achieve the goal of shaping the political views of the masses. *Mały Dziennik* described its mission as ‘educating everybody about everything’. Its political agenda was veiled by the newspaper with the illusion of promoting a spiritual revival of the nation. Nationalism that is presented as a part of the Roman Catholic ethos is definitely also *Nasz Dziennik*’s political agenda.

The two newspapers also share the marketing strategy of making themselves intellectually and financially accessible to the widest, mostly less educated audience. *Mały Dziennik* mainly consisted of short news materials and on average in one issue included only one or two longer articles. The news reports had a ‘digested’ form, they informed what and where happened with a minimum analysis, usually reduced to two sentences or a punch line, often loaded with emotional language or sarcasm. The slight variation in *Nasz Dziennik* is that it makes an effort to appear a bit more respectable. First of all, it avoids the more vulgar (though not entirely abandoning) language that often peppered the articles of its predecessor. Secondly, it prints essays written by (non-mainstream) academics to give itself the credit of serious journalism. In some way these essays might have germinated from much shorter articles of similar form, in particular by Father Dr S. Trzeciak<sup>5</sup> in *Mały Dziennik*. Certainly the way Trzeciak gave the impression of being erudite has been present in the post-war publication’s articles of Pogonowski or Bajda. *Nasz Dziennik* consciously adopted a very austere graphic design, astonishingly reminiscent of the pre-war *Mały Dziennik*. Though over last years *Nasz Dziennik* moved on with the demands of the market introducing colour photographs and pullouts, overall it is still faithful to its original conservative look. The message it means to convey is that the newspaper does not spend the money from donations on frivolous things such as design, also it underlines its ideology that the package is less important than the values it promotes.

In order to establish whether *Nasz Dziennik* is drawing directly on the ideology presented in the writings of its predecessor one needs to provide a comparative content analysis of the two publications, which is the aim of this chapter.

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<sup>5</sup> S. Trzeciak specialised in proving that *the Protocols of the Elders of Zion* were right, demonstrating the rotten morality of the Talmud and opposing the *shehita*, see: S. Trzeciak, *Talmud o gojach a kwestia żydowska w Polsce*, (Warsaw, 1939).



On the surface, the geo-political, demographic and cultural differences seem to put the two publications poles apart – after all both dailies comment on current issues and those in today's Poland could not be more different from the situation in the 1930s. Most important is the absence of Jews in Poland as the consequence of the Holocaust and of the persecutions they faced under the Communist regime in 1950s and after 1968. However, as I already demonstrated in this work, the Holocaust is never a reason for *Nasz Dziennik* to reduce its antisemitic tone, if anything 'the special treatment the Jews get' because of the Holocaust enrages the newspaper. As for the demographics, a large Jewish minority was an easy target for nationalists who tried to channel the frustrations of the masses and to gain political capital. Today according to the Union of Jewish Communities there are about 8,000 affiliated Jews in Poland,<sup>6</sup> however 27% of Polish society are convinced that there are a lot of Jews in Poland, their estimates ranging from a few million to tens of thousands.<sup>7</sup> At the same time 37% think that there are a lot of Jewish politicians in Poland. These estimates do not undergo verification even when faced with the absence of Jews in the daily life of the respondents. This paradox owes a lot to the conviction that Jews act secretly and deliberately disguise themselves as 'real Poles' to manipulate the others.

This idea that Jews deceive others by changing their name, appearance or even by converting to Christianity was very much present in the right-wing Catholic press in the 1930s and in *Mały Dziennik* in particular. The newspaper saw Jewish assimilation and fondness for Polish secular culture as threatening and not in Poland's interest.<sup>8</sup> Today,

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<sup>6</sup> In the 2002 census only 1055 people declared to be Jewish. Data according to the Ministry of Interior and Administration: <http://www.mswia.gov.pl/index.php?dzial=61&id=37#zydzi>.

<sup>7</sup> In the 2002 survey 2.5% of the respondents thought that there are a few million Jews, 9% hundreds of thousands and 16.9% tens of thousands, see: I. Krzemiński (ed.), *Antysemityzm w Polsce i na Ukrainie, raport z badań*, (Warsaw, 2004), p. 96, also similar results in: A. Sułek, *Ilu jest w Polsce Żydów? Eksperymentalne studium wpływu skali na adpowiedzi ankietowe*, in: A. Sułek (ed.), *Spojrzenie na metodę. Studia z metodologii badań socjologicznych*, in: H. Domański, K. Lutyńska, A. W. Rostocki, (eds.), *Spojrzenie na metodę. Studia z metodologii badań socjologicznych* (Warsaw, 1999). A study focused on high school children in 1990 showed that 25% thought that Jews had too much power in Poland, in A. Tuszyńska, 'Nie jestem rasistką', *Kultura*, 6/513 (June 1990), pp. 3-26. In addition a survey carried out by *Wprost* showed that 40% of Poles believe that Poland is still governed by Jews: *Wprost*, 3: 18 Jan, 2004, pp. 28-30.

<sup>8</sup> 'Obrońcom „kultury” żydowskiej w odpowiedzi', *Mały Dziennik*, 47: 16 Feb. 1939, p. 5; *Mały Dziennik* also campaigned for cleansing the culture of the Jews: 'Sprawa żydowska', *Mały Dziennik*, 33: 18 June 1935, p. 3; it opposed Jewish presence in journalism, music, radio presenting and even in sport: 'Przeciwko zażydzeniu polskiej organizacji', *Mały Dziennik*, 55: 25 Feb. 1936, p. 5; 'Żydzi w rozgłośni katowickiej', *Mały Dziennik Śląsko Łódzki*, 63: 4 Mar. 1936, p. 5; 'Odwrót od muzyki żydowskiej nieco porawił dolę



*Nasz Dziennik* exploits the myth about the deceitful Jew. Also, it supports the general conviction that Jews are everywhere and in much greater numbers than anyone is ready to admit. Of course today it is much harder to argue that Jews are everywhere, but *Nasz Dziennik* does so by focusing on the handful of Polish Jews present in public life, mainly journalists and intellectuals, in a bid to demonstrate their influence over Polish affairs. The Jews easily ‘multiply’ on the pages of *Nasz Dziennik*, as sometimes people become Jewish merely by association. The same technique was used in *Mały Dziennik* which wrote about Jews penetrating and controlling various spheres of national life without giving concrete examples.

*Mały Dziennik* was an avid supporter of the boycott of Jewish businesses. In fact the boycott became the most important campaign in the newspaper and the cornerstone of its political agenda. If we look at the articles, especially from 1935 and 1936, the first year of the newspaper’s existence, the time when it set out its political manifesto, it is the boycott and not other Jewish-related topics that dominate its pages. *Mały Dziennik* fought Jewish bloodsucking capitalists, attacked ‘Jewish factory owners breaking state legislation and mistreating the workers.’ As if that was not enough even the canteen in a Jewish factory was depicted as full of bugs and dirty.<sup>9</sup> The theme of unhygienic Jewish businesses and especially food products being dirty and infested with insects appeared frequently in the newspaper and demonised the Jew even further.<sup>10</sup> The lack of hygiene in addition to ‘unnecessary barbarity’ were arguments in the national campaign supported by *Mały Dziennik* to ban the *shehita*.<sup>11</sup> The newspaper argued that in many places where Jews had a monopoly on meat retail the extra charge for ritual slaughter was passed on to the Christian customer. However, in addition to economic arguments *Mały Dziennik* used

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zespółów’, *Mały Dziennik*, 5-6: 7 Jan. 1938, p. 4; ‘“Szabesgoje” w sporcie’, *Mały Dziennik*, 64: 5 Mar. 1936, p. 6; ‘Nie można zmuszać związków sportowych do pracy społecznej z Żydami’, *Mały Dziennik*, 28: 29 Jan. 1938, [no page no.].

<sup>9</sup> ‘Niesłychane stosunki w fabryce żydowskiej’, *Mały Dziennik*, 72: 28 July 1935, pp. 1,2; for similar articles see for example: ‘O cenzusie kupieckim’, *Mały Dziennik*, 76: 1 Aug. 1935, p. 3; ‘Przewagę dadzą Żydom’, *Mały Dziennik*, 86: 11 Aug. 1935, p. 1; ‘Żydowskie kasy bezprocentowe’, *Mały Dziennik*, 88: 13 Aug. 1935, p. 5; ‘Walka o odżydzenie polskiego budownictwa’, *Mały Dziennik*, 29-30: 29-30 Jan. 1939, p. 8.

<sup>10</sup> ‘Żydowska higiena “rytualna”’, *Mały Dziennik*, 151: 15 Oct. 1935, p. 9.

<sup>11</sup> A. Kalina, ‘Dlaczego mięso jest drogie?’, *Mały Dziennik*, 116: 10 Sep. 1935, p. 5; ‘Mafia żydowska dyktuje ceny mięsa’, *Mały Dziennik*, 105: 30 Aug. 1935, p. 5; ‘Jednolity front żydowski’, *Mały Dziennik*, 63: 4 Mar. 1936, p. 3. Compare: M. Fuks, *Żydzi w Warszawie: życie codzienne, wydarzenia, ludzie*, (Poznań, 1992).



the *shehita* controversy to demonise further the Jews as delighting in cruelty of the ‘bloody ritual’. The newspaper attacked and listed Jewish monopolies even in the smallest towns. It declared that ‘Jewish monopolists prefer to waste shiploads of fruit rather than see their prices drop’<sup>12</sup> and even claimed that there was no unemployment among the Jews.<sup>13</sup> Whenever a Polish-Catholic shop opened in an area dominated by Jewish business *Mały Dziennik* saw it as a cause for celebration.<sup>14</sup> However, despite the efforts of the newspaper to depict Jews as monopolists, as wealthy at the expense of the Catholic retailer, it is evident from the articles that the real enemy of the newspaper was simply an average Jewish owner of a small shop. The Jewish shopkeeper has been most often attacked as cheating the clients and selling goods of poor quality [tandeta].<sup>15</sup> *Mały Dziennik* spoke even of a ‘mafia of Jewish shopkeepers’<sup>16</sup> and reported that many Jewish shopkeepers were like the one who had (allegedly) ‘beaten up an old lady because she did not want to buy rotten fruit’.<sup>17</sup>

Of course today in Poland there are no Jewish shops, markets or peddlers, nevertheless in the rhetoric of *Nasz Dziennik* on the EU and global economy we can trace elements of the pre-war boycott discourse. In the pre-war articles the Jews undermined the Polish economy because they owned too many small businesses and shops and controlled world finance. In *Nasz Dziennik* Jews are also said to undermine the economy because they control international finance. Just as in the pre-war period slogans to purge the economy from the Jews are used instead of constructive and complex economical solutions. Recently, just as the pre-war predecessor, *Nasz Dziennik* started printing pull-outs entitled *Kupiec Polski* [Polish Merchant – the use of the word merchant, old-fashioned in Polish today is a deliberate attempt to allude to pre-war language of economic boycott]. This new venture promotes Polish and Catholic businesses.

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<sup>12</sup> ‘Żydowski monopol owoców południowych’, *Mały Dziennik*, 34: 19 June 1935, p. 5.

<sup>13</sup> ‘Wśród żydów nie ma bezrobocia’, *Mały Dziennik Śląsko-Łódzki*, 70: 11 Mar. 1936, p. 7.

<sup>14</sup> ‘Powód do radości’, *Mały Dziennik*, 151: 15 Oct. 1935, p. 9.

<sup>15</sup> ‘Jak można oszukać kupującego?’, *Mały Dziennik*, 61: 17 July 1935, p. 4; ‘Żydowska bezczelność nie zna granic’, *Mały Dziennik Śląsko-Łódzki*, 98: 8 Apr. 1935, p. 3; ‘Zakulisowe manewry’, *Mały Dziennik*, 64: 5 Mar. 1936, p. 4; ‘U żyda taniej, ale zawsze nieuczciwie’, *Mały Dziennik*, 63: 4 Mar. 1936, p. 4.

<sup>16</sup> ‘Wsie i miasteczka polskie’, *Mały Dziennik*, 44: 18 June 1935, p. 4.

<sup>17</sup> ‘Pobicie staruszki’, *Mały Dziennik*, 158: 22 Oct. 1935, p. 4.



The economic boycott in the 1930s was supposed to lead to mass emigration of the Jews. *Endecja* supported Zionism as a solution to the 'Jewish problem' in Poland and in Europe. Some were even envious of the way the Nazis were forcing the Jews to emigrate in 1933. In 1938 *Mały Dziennik* was very impressed with the anti-Jewish legislation introduced in Romania<sup>18</sup> and in 1939 it reported that 'all nations want to get rid of the Jews' and Poland should be wise enough to follow their lead.<sup>19</sup> *Mały Dziennik* did not see Jewish emigration as the only means to solve all Poland's economic problems. When a reader suggested confiscation of all Jewish property and business the newspaper found the idea 'interesting'.<sup>20</sup> Though the newspaper was concerned about the Christian character of Palestine, on the whole it was much more preoccupied with getting Jews out of Poland. Maybe the remark that 'Palestine is too small for all the Jews' reflects that *Mały Dziennik*, just as some Zionists at the time, did not expect that the Jewish state would be created in Palestine. The ambivalence of *Nasz Dziennik* towards Israel is in some ways a continuation of this split loyalty, between the desire for the Holy Land to have a Christian character and the Polish nationalistic stance that Jews are no longer welcome to live in Poland.

Judeo-communism is another stereotype exploited by *Nasz Dziennik*. The newspaper focuses on the 'Jewish crimes' committed against Poles during the Stalinist era. This myth however, did not originate in the 1950s, but goes back to the pre-war period. In the light of those articles, one may expect to find important material in *Mały Dziennik* relating to Jewish Communists and especially to the Polish-Bolshevik war in 1920, the event which is credited for giving birth to the myth. *Mały Dziennik* tried to spot Jewish Communists whenever possible, and they were accused of 'spreading gangrene' of anti-religiousness in schools.<sup>21</sup> During the Spanish Civil War the newspaper blamed Jews for stirring anti-Church violence as they, along with 'Freemasons and Marxists, allegedly used the Spanish masses.'<sup>22</sup> Also, *Mały Dziennik* argued that 'the most fervent friends of Communism in Poland are among the various strata of Jewry, concentrated in

<sup>18</sup> 'Jak Rumunia rozwiązuje kwestię żydowską', *Mały Dziennik*, 27: 28 Jan. 1938, p. 1.

<sup>19</sup> 'Wszystkie narody pragną się pozbyć żydów', *Mały Dziennik*, 4: 4 Jan. 1939, p. 5.

<sup>20</sup> 'Kraków zgłasza ciekawy projekt unarodowienia życia polskiego', *Mały Dziennik*, 42: 12 Feb. 1936, p. 5.

<sup>21</sup> 'Fala komunizmu w Łodzi', *Mały Dziennik Śląsko-Łódzki* 64: 5 Mar. 1936, p. 5.

<sup>22</sup> 'Zwycięstwo masonerii w Hiszpanji', *Mały Dziennik* 51: 21 Feb. 1936, p. 3; 'Żydzi z Polski zaopatrują w broń czerwoną Hiszpanię', *Mały Dziennik*, 201: 23 July 1938, p. 1.



our towns and cities' and that 'on our ground the triumph of Bolshevism would be a triumph of the Jews.'<sup>23</sup> However, it is apparent that the newspaper struggled for a good story<sup>24</sup> and the evidence that would show how enticed by Communism all Jews were. Most of the articles simply quoted someone stating for example that 'most of the Communists in Kraków are to be found in Jewish quarters'<sup>25</sup> rather than giving any facts to support the accusations.

The antisemitic trope that Jews spread Communism was certainly present in *Mały Dziennik*, however it did not amount to the most prominent theme. The Jew in *Mały Dziennik* is rather more presented as a shopkeeper or a factory owner who cheats the Catholic customer and suffocates Polish economic growth. This contradicts the arguments of a few scholars who wish to see antisemitic discourse in the newspaper as a justified protest against the imminent threat of Bolshevism.<sup>26</sup> I would argue that in *Mały Dziennik* Judeo-Communism formed only part of a broader theme that I would entitle 'Jewish Evil'. The theme concentrated around the conviction that Jews always come up with, get attached to and promote the dirtiest, the most perverse, immoral and damaging ideas. Hence the Jews were reported to secretly pull the strings behind the world freemasonry.<sup>27</sup> Jews and freemasons [Żydzi i masoni] has been a catchphrase of antisemitic discourse since the 18<sup>th</sup> century, it was a key word in the Dreyfus affair and was also used by the German right and Hitler in the 1930s.<sup>28</sup> The conspiracy theory of Jews and freemasons controlling the world is prominent in both *Mały Dziennik* and *Nasz Dziennik*. In both newspapers, despite the efforts to the contrary, it is a non-story, a forced attempt to look for Jews everywhere and to blame them for all troubles. When the

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<sup>23</sup> 'Czerwone niebezpieczeństwo', *Mały Dziennik*, 86: 11 Aug. 1935, p. 3.

<sup>24</sup> 'As usual the leading saboteurs [wywrotowcy] turned up to be Jews' in: 'Wielki proces komunistyczny w Bydgoszczy', *Mały Dziennik*, 66: 7 Mar. 1936, p. 4.

<sup>25</sup> 'Policjanci przed sądem', *Mały Dziennik* 145: 27 May 1937, p. 2; 'Poszkodowani żydzi', *Mały Dziennik* 147: 29 May 1937, p. 2.

<sup>26</sup> Such views are presented in the collection of essays mainly by lecturers of Catholic universities in Poland. The authors agree with the outlook of *Mały Dziennik* that Jews posed a threat to Poland and Catholicism. See: S. C. Napiórkowski (ed.), *A bliźniego swego....Materiały z sympozjum „Św. Maksymilian Maria Kolbe – Żydzi – masoni”*, (Lublin, 1997).

<sup>27</sup> Most important article on this topic by Father S. Trzeciak, 'Apelujemy do Wysokiego Sejmu', *Mały Dziennik*, 198: 20 July 1938, p. 1, also see: 'Młodzież', *Mały Dziennik*, 102: 27 Aug. 1935, p. 3; 'Sprawa masonerii', *Mały Dziennik*, 193: 15 July 1938, p. 3; 'O pociągnięcie masonów do odpowiedzialności sądowej', *Mały Dziennik*, 201: 23 July 1938, p. 1.

<sup>28</sup> R. Modras, *Kościół katolicki i antysemityzm w Polsce w latach 1933-1939*, (Kraków, 2004), p. 23, see also: J. Katz, *Jews and Freemasons in Europe 1723-1939*, (Cambridge, Mass, 1970).



stories about the freemasons resurface in the articles it is usually a sign that no better ones were available at the time to fill in anti-Jewish columns. Nevertheless, their impact cannot be underestimated as today, just as before the war, many writers and readers were devout believers in the Jewish conspiracy.

Further, Jews were blamed in *Mały Dziennik* for spreading pornography, prostitution, human trafficking and generally for introducing 'loose' lifestyles into the otherwise god-fearing Catholic flock.<sup>29</sup> Sometimes the most outraged articles were provoked by very trivial incidents such as Jewish merchants selling pocket mirrors with 'indecent pictures' on their covers.<sup>30</sup> This particular article accused Jews of demoralising Catholic youth with their merchandises, the newspaper did not question whether it was not the youth that created a demand for such products. The broad theme of the 'Jewish Evil' takes its roots in *Mały Dziennik* in the theories of F. Koneczny and S. Trzeciak. It is not that Jews happen to stray or that they are especially vulnerable to immoral influences, the Jewish spirit and soul were respectively portrayed as, by definition, inherently and unchangeably evil. The source of this evil that mutated the Jewish soul was identified as the Talmud. The frequently quoted Father Dr S. Trzeciak saw two 'sources of evil in Jews...their materialism and Talmudic rules.'<sup>31</sup> Other commentators saw materialism as a driving force behind 'changes to the Torah made to fit those [materialistic] goals', hence 'even when projects are contrary to the Torah, rabbis specialise in finding a loophole.'<sup>32</sup> Thus even religious Jews could not be seen as trustworthy because they followed the distortion of the Torah and subscribed to the barbarism of ritual slaughter,<sup>33</sup> accepted divorce<sup>34</sup> and even when they made promises on Yom Kippur could easily waive them.<sup>35</sup>

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<sup>29</sup> 'Żydowski księgarz pod pręgierzem', *Mały Dziennik*, 137: 1 Oct. 1935, p. 5; Z. Marjański, 'Nie mogą się zdobyć na prawdę', *Mały Dziennik*, 146: 10 Oct. 1935, p. 3. See also: S. Trzeciak, *Pornografia narzędziem obcych agentur*, (Warsaw, 1920).

<sup>30</sup> 'Żydowscy handlarze sprzedają lusterka z nieprzyzwoitymi ilustracjami', *Mały Dziennik*, 28: 29 Jan. 1938, p. 5.

<sup>31</sup> S. Trzeciak, 'U źródeł antyjudaizmu', *Mały Dziennik*, 172: 23 Aug. 1936, p. 3.

<sup>32</sup> 'Rabini amerykańscy...', *Mały Dziennik*, 99: 24 Aug. 1935, p. 5.

<sup>33</sup> 'Pomorze pionierem', *Mały Dziennik*, 69: 10 Mar. 1936, p. 4

<sup>34</sup> 'Rabini amerykańscy...', *Mały Dziennik*, 99: 24 Aug. 1935, p. 5

<sup>35</sup> Z. Marjański, 'Nie mogą się zdobyć na prawdę', *Mały Dziennik*, 146: 10 Oct. 1935, p. 3.



In view of such stereotyping, it is not surprising that *Mały Dziennik* fiercely opposed that Jewish educators should teach Catholic children.<sup>36</sup> When Jewish teachers were allowed to look after little Poles at summer camps, immediately *Mały Dziennik* reported about Jews ‘pouring poison into their little souls’,<sup>37</sup> introducing godlessness and mocking children who wished to say their evening prayers.<sup>38</sup> Much more shocking is the newspaper’s campaign to stop mixing Jewish and Catholic children in state schools and on state sponsored summer camps. *Mały Dziennik* viewed the soul of the Jewish child as already irreparably morally flawed and therefore the most serious threat to the Polish child and continuity of Polish and Catholic moral values. The newspaper was convinced about the ‘negative influence on the child’s soul when making friends with Jews....[as] false and damaging Talmud’s ethic unnoticed creeps into the souls of our children, as they interact daily [with Jews] and wither [karłowacą].’ In addition the newspaper speculated that in mixed summer camps and schools crosses and holy pictures were likely to be desecrated by little Jews [żydziątka<sup>39</sup>].<sup>40</sup> Hence, the newspaper postulated that the Jewish education should be isolated and under strict control of the authorities.<sup>41</sup> In this image of the Jewish child we can detect a medieval representation of the Jew as the Devil. However, this connotation is much more veiled in *Mały Dziennik* than in other publications of the time. For example *Pro Christo* proclaimed that Jewish blood contaminates (that is defiles somehow even those who are only distant descendants of a Jew).<sup>42</sup> The satanic and bipolar representation of the Jew has been preserved in the consciousness of some and in the folk culture even after the war, as shown in Alina Cała’s research.<sup>43</sup> Today’s *Nasz Dziennik* does not openly use such crude images, however it does refer to the Talmud in a derogatory way, quotes Trzeciak with

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<sup>36</sup> ‘Czy to dopuszczalne?’, *Mały Dziennik*, 53: 9 June 1935, p. 3; ‘Nauczyciele żydowscy...’, *Mały Dziennik*, 167: 27 Oct. 1935, p. 4.

<sup>37</sup> A. Kalina, ‘Żydzi usiłują zdeprawować...’, *Mały Dziennik*, 72: 28 July 1935, p. 5.

<sup>38</sup> ‘Żyd nie może być wychowawcą Polaków’, *Mały Dziennik*, 60: 16 July 1935, p. 6.

<sup>39</sup> *Mały Dziennik* used various forms of the word Jew: ‘żydek’, ‘żydziak’, ‘żydziątka’. Strictly speaking these are diminutives, forms usually reserved for expressing endearment and affection. However, in the context of the articles they take on a sinister meaning. ‘Żydziątka’ could mean ‘little Jewish children’ – an allusion to ‘dzieciątka’ [little children]. However, next to the references to their ‘poisonous souls’ it is more a phonetic pun on ‘zwierzątka’ – little animals. The word is meant to dehumanise the Jewish child.

<sup>40</sup> ‘Mieszanie dzieci polskich z żydowskimi’, *Mały Dziennik*, 79: 4 Aug. 1935, p. 5.

<sup>41</sup> ‘Żydzi w Polsce’, *Mały Dziennik*, 95: 20 Aug. 1935, p. 5.

<sup>42</sup> R. Modras, *Kościół katolicki...*, p. 161.

<sup>43</sup> A. Cała, *The Image of the Jew in Polish Folk Culture*, (Jerusalem, 1995). For a broader theme see: J. Trachtenberg, *The Devil and the Jews*, (New Haven, 1961).



admiration and promotes his books. Further, the medieval perceptions of the Jew resurfaced to some extent during *The Passion of the Christ* controversy.

The perception of the Jew as evil already from childhood is the foundation of the attitudes towards anti-Jewish violence presented in the two *Dzienniks*. Both newspapers show a lack of empathy when Jews are persecuted by a third party and blame the anti-Jewish violence on Jews themselves when such persecutions came from ethnic Poles. The anti-Jewish legislations in Germany, and the Nuremberg laws in 1935 in particular, has been reported by *Mały Dziennik* with a hint of admiration for Hitler and his government.<sup>44</sup> The newspaper rejoiced that the Jews were going back to ghettos and proclaimed that they had only themselves to blame as Jews 'were having an enormous influence on politics and the great German economy, the press, theatres, film industry were in their hands; they made decisions on currents in art and literature'.<sup>45</sup> Further, the Jewish protests at the violence and discrimination were dismissed as 'grotesque exaggeration of Jewish persecutions'.<sup>46</sup> The only concern the newspaper showed was that the Jewish refugees would flock to Poland and subsequently it reported how German Jews were being a threat and annoyance to the locals.<sup>47</sup> When reporting on the Kristallnacht *Mały Dziennik* gave no details about 'anti-Jewish manifestations' and was more concerned with the murder of von Rath.<sup>48</sup> The article reporting the death of von Rath used the rhetoric resembling that of blood libel: 'insane Jews were not satisfied with the blood of a third rate civil servant'. In February 1939 *Mały Dziennik* enthusiastically reported on the project drafted by an MP, Mr Dudziński, who proposed a creation of labour camps for Jews.<sup>49</sup> Such comments and the tone of discourse continued until September 1939.

Insensitivity towards Jewish suffering is a constant feature in the articles of *Nasz Dziennik*, even when it is writing about the Holocaust. The two newspapers also share the

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<sup>44</sup> 'Doniosłe ustawy antyżydowskie', *Mały Dziennik*, 123: 17 Sept. 1935, p. 3.

<sup>45</sup> 'Z powrotem do Ghetta', *Mały Dziennik*, 128: 22 Sept. 1935, p. 5.

<sup>46</sup> 'Niemcy prowadzą akcję antysemityczną', *Mały Dziennik*, 70: 26 July 1935, p.2; 'Żydzi niemieccy bez adwokatów', *Mały Dziennik*, 151: 15 Oct. 1935, p. 9.

<sup>47</sup> 'Zalew żydostwa na Śląsku cieszyńskim', *Mały Dziennik*, 86: 27 Mar. 1936, p. 4, 'Oblegane od wieków miasto', *Mały Dziennik*, 205: 27 July 1938, p. 5.

<sup>48</sup> *Mały Dziennik*, 311: 11-12 Nov. 1938, p. 2.

<sup>49</sup> I am not suggesting that the newspaper came up with the idea of the Final Solution, though such ideas bring chilling resemblance to Nazi propaganda that described death camps as labour camps. 'Obozy pracy dla żydów', *Mały Dziennik*, 49: 18 Feb. 1939, pp. 1, 2.



outlook on violence towards Jews that was perpetrated by Poles, they omit details of bloody attacks on Jews, quote rumours to justify the violence and try to blame the victims for the attacks. *Mały Dziennik* in the economic boycott articles stressed that it opposed any violence and vandalism. However, when those occurred it treated the attacks as a natural consequence of the nation's 'awakening'.<sup>50</sup> Reports on anti-Jewish violence during the High Holidays in the Łódź area<sup>51</sup> and a year later about plans to blow up Jewish shops by nationalists in Łódź<sup>52</sup> (some were implemented) were written without any sympathy for the victims. Another incident of murder without further comment reported that the attacks on Jews were 'provoked by rumours about the desecration of the Corpus Christi procession and murder of two Christians.'<sup>53</sup> The newspaper blamed Jewish students for the violence they faced at universities<sup>54</sup> and continued being outraged at the 'Jews flooding universities' at the expense of the Poles.<sup>55</sup> Similarly, after the Przytyk pogrom it preferred to focus on the voices that called for a stop to the Jewish outcry.<sup>56</sup> The newspaper that claimed to foster Catholic values did not condemn these violent attacks as incompatible with Christianity.<sup>57</sup> However, we have to bear in mind that Church officials themselves were reluctant to condemn such acts.<sup>58</sup> The continuation of such attitudes is evident in *Nasz Dziennik*'s commenting on the pre-war violence, Polish extortionists during the war, the Jedwabne massacre and other cases of violence against the Jews. *Nasz Dziennik* does not recognise or justifies anti-Jewish violence.

To sum up, despite differences in the current situation in Poland and that of the interwar period, there is an evident continuity of nationalistic ideas when we compare the themes in articles of *Mały Dziennik* and *Nasz Dziennik*. Also, the image of the Jew as a

<sup>50</sup> 'Oskarżenia o zdemolowanie sklepów żydowskich', *Mały Dziennik*, 44: 18 June 1935, p. 4.

<sup>51</sup> 'Zajścia antyżydowskie', *Mały Dziennik*, 140: 4 Oct. 1935, p. 5.

<sup>52</sup> 'Motywy wyroku', *Mały Dziennik*, 99: 9 Apr. 1936, p. 5.

<sup>53</sup> 'Dramatyczne sceny w sali sądowej', *Mały Dziennik*, 146: 10 Oct. 1935, p. 2.

<sup>54</sup> 'Zajścia na Uniwersytecie', *Mały Dziennik*, 65: 6 Mar. 1936, p. 4.

<sup>55</sup> 'Smutna statystyka', *Mały Dziennik*, 155: 19 Oct. 1935, p. 5. In addition the newspaper advocated introduction of the bench ghettos in the high schools, 'Oddzielne ławki dla żydów w gimnazjach i liceach', 253: 14 Sept. 1938, p. 5.

<sup>56</sup> 'Zagadnienia polityki wewnętrznej', *Mały Dziennik*, 75: 14 Mar. 1936, pp.1, 3.

<sup>57</sup> '...krwawe zajścia na Powązkach', *Mały Dziennik*, 140: 4 Oct. 1935, p. 5; 'Przebieg wielkiego procesu', *Mały Dziennik Śląsko-Łódzki*, 97: 7 Apr. 1936, p. 5.

<sup>58</sup> Not only there was no condemnation, but the church officials openly shared the nationalistic and antisemitic views. In 1936 cardinal August Hlond sent out a pastoral letter in which he said that Jews are the vanguard of godlessness, Bolshevism and subversive actions. Similarly pope Pius XI issued no condemnation of the persecution of the Jews. See: R. Modras, *Kościół katolicki...*, p. 130.



threat to the Polish nation seems not to have evolved much over 70 years. However, in *Mały Dziennik* this image is created at two levels, realistic and mythical. We are given a report about a Jewish child that spends holidays with Catholic children, there is no report of any trouble, however the newspaper introduces the myth that the Jewish child is poisoned by immorality. On the whole the newspaper attacked ‘real’ Jews – shopkeepers, teachers, children, and argued that they are cunning and dangerous. Occasionally *Mały Dziennik* introduced a more mythical Jewish figure like a member of an international conspiracy, Communist or freemasonic or even of both. The image of the Jew in the current daily, *Nasz Dziennik*, is almost entirely mythical. In the absence of Jews in Poland today we are left with mythical ideas about the Jews that *Nasz Dziennik* perpetuates – Judeo-Communism, Jewish international conspiracy and Jewish anti-Polonism. In the pre-war publication despite the efforts to demonise the Jews we got a glimpse of reality of Jewish life then: poverty, sports matches between Jews and Catholics, efforts to assimilate, love of Polish culture and suffering of acute discrimination and threats of violence from fellow Poles.

R. Modras argued that *Mały Dziennik* supported the boycott so vigorously because it was not easy to enforce it. The public remembered the saying ‘in a Jewish shop it is cheaper.’<sup>59</sup> This especially applied to the rural areas. We must ask the question: what was the impact of the antisemitic messages proclaimed by *Mały Dziennik*. Also, we should try to answer whether that impact is similar in the case of *Nasz Dziennik*. In pre-war Poland Catholics could confront the image of the Jew presented in the most popular daily with reality. Still, was it sufficient to convince them that underneath the resemblance to a human being, one just like them, did not lurk the danger of a poisoned soul? What happened when the arguments from *Mały Dziennik* were repeated by a priest or teacher? Antoni Marianowicz in his recollections of the war time mentions the devoted housekeeper who used to read *Mały Dziennik* back to back. When the Jewish-Protestant family found themselves in danger during the occupation they could not believe his betrayal that came after years of living together.<sup>60</sup> Was the daily responsible for the lack of scruples? Although we will never be able to measure the impact of pre-war

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<sup>59</sup> R. Modras, *Kościół katolicki...*, p.235.

<sup>60</sup> A. Marianowicz, *Life strictly forbidden*, (London and Portland, OR, 2004), p. 262.



antisemitism onto the behaviour of Poles towards the Jews during the occupation, we cannot disregard the link between the two. *Mały Dziennik*'s degrading of Jews sheds light on the question why there was no public outcry when Jews, even children, were being murdered. *Nasz Dziennik* continues demonising the Jews, resurrecting old myths and disregarding the Jewish suffering, including that of children, in the past and present. Again the impact of these messages is hard to measure but the newspaper is responsible for putting the antisemitic agenda in the mainstream journalism. Apart from contributing to the rising levels of antisemitism *Nasz Dziennik* and other nationalistic media provide a safe refuge for those who do not want to look at Polish history critically. *Mały Dziennik* had found a right heir to continue its work of disseminating prejudice.



## Conclusion

The main objective of my study was to answer the question how does *Nasz Dziennik* treat the Jews? I used the theories of chimerical fantasies, mimetic desire and scapegoating, as well as that of antisemitism as cultural code in order to identify some processes that may lay behind the formulation of antisemitic prejudice in *Nasz Dziennik*. In addition, I relied on a discourse-historical approach which demanded presenting the historical and current affairs background information in order to understand various layers of the text. Uncovering deposits of antisemitic discourse that form *Nasz Dziennik*'s rhetoric was especially important. Sometimes the antisemitic slurs were hidden behind word-codes, while at other times they were so powerful because they recalled much older, even medieval antisemitic myths.

I searched for an object of mimetic desire over which *Nasz Dziennik* enters into a conflict with the Jews. The strongest sentiments in relation to Jews in *Nasz Dziennik* arise over the self-image of the Poles and memory about the Holocaust and the Communist regime. However, at the same time I looked for more subtle undercurrents that strengthen the antisemitic prejudice in *Nasz Dziennik*. Religious and cultural codes that are activated even when the word Jew is mentioned, contribute to much more complex and long-term causes behind the revival of antisemitic tropes in the newspaper and in Polish society in general.

The two topics that dominate the articles related to Jews in *Nasz Dziennik* are the Holocaust and the Jedwabne massacre. However, it has to be stressed that neither the Holocaust nor the Jedwabne theme concentrate on the extermination of the Jews during World War II, their suffering or the actual events that took place in Jedwabne in 1941. Instead, the newspaper discusses respectively the perceived injustice that the Polish suffering during the war does not get the same recognition as the 'Jewish Holocaust' and the 'Jewish slurs' on the Polish honour.

Even though *Nasz Dziennik* does not present accounts of the horrific extermination of the Jews, the subject of the memory about the Holocaust is important for the newspaper. Textbooks educating about the event, plans to commemorate Jewish victims or to establish the Museum of the History of Polish Jews are unequivocally viewed as attempts at manipulation of history. This is because *Nasz Dziennik* holds on to the view that there was nothing unique about the Holocaust.



Though *Nasz Dziennik* does not deny that the Holocaust happened, it fiercely objects that the fate of the Jews was any different from that of the Poles during the Nazi occupation. In addition, the newspaper focuses on the so-called 'Holocaust industry'. Jewish suffering is presented almost exclusively through a lens of income from the Holocaust theme publications, funds obtained to preserve the places of memory, compensations received by the victims etc. *Nasz Dziennik* does not write about the human tragedy, about the Jewish victims, about their memories. While Polish suffering is made personal, Jewish suffering only appears in the financial context.

At the same time some authors try to 'Polonise' the memory about the Holocaust. This is especially apparent when they write about Auschwitz without mentioning Jews, the main victims of the death machine of the camp. This lack of perspective may seem extraordinary, especially considering that in the democratic Poland since 1989 Jewish suffering has been publicised by scholars and by the media. Some may see here the legacy of the Communist regime's long-term efforts to commemorate the victims of the Nazi crimes rather than the Jews who perished in the Holocaust. However, the Communists included Jews among the victims, counted them as Poles, whereas the nationalists want to marginalise Jewish suffering by increasing the estimates of ethnic Polish victims of Nazism. They also wish to exclude the Jews altogether from Polish history. I would argue that the attitude of *Nasz Dziennik* to the Holocaust and to general commemoration of Polish-Jewish history is tied closely to the *Endecja*'s ideology in which footsteps the newspaper follows. Just as *Endecja* did, *Nasz Dziennik* refuses the Jews any right to be Poles at the same time and it perceives them as enemies of Poland. Thus, Jews are excluded from the Polish collective memory, just as before the war they were excluded from the 'Polish entity'. The nationalists have no regrets about the absence of Jews from the remembrance process nor do they regret the actual absence of Jews in Poland. The core of the problem is that the majority of Poles do not regret this absence either, as I demonstrated when discussing the results of sociological surveys.

Veneration of suffering and Polish victim culture make the more nationalistic groups of society feel very protective about the image of Poles as those who suffered most during World War II. This attitude is rooted in a more general messianic ethos that portrays Poland as a Christ-like figure, suffering for the redemption of the whole world. Passively and unintentionally Jews with their baggage of suffering, especially the Holocaust, became the rivals of Poles, especially those disillusioned ones who



look back to the past for comfort and pride in the face of current political and economic crisis. *Nasz Dziennik* is caught up in the mimetic conflict over the image of Poland as the ultimate victim. However, at the beginning this conflict resulted in emphasising of the Polish suffering, omitting that of the Jews and presenting the Holocaust as a tool of Jews to get sympathy and money for their various causes. The degree of viciousness in the articles related to the Holocaust rose after the Jedwabne case and was directly related to it. In other words, some Poles and *Nasz Dziennik* would always exploit the myth about honourable Polish victims during the war, however it gained crucial importance once the whitewashed version of Polish history had been challenged.

Jewish suffering during the Holocaust is a threat to the myth that Poles suffered most in history and during World War II. By contrast, the Jedwabne massacre, as well as other cases of blackmailing and murdering defenceless Jews during the Nazi occupation, challenged the version of history in which Poles always act morally and never commit any atrocities. Here we can identify a conflict over the idea that is fundamental to the nationalistic ideology. In this context, *Nasz Dziennik* resorted to sharpening its rhetoric by attacking all Jewish victims of the Nazi persecution. Before Jedwabne the newspaper left the victims of the Holocaust in peace, and rather attacked those Jews who capitalised on their suffering. After the Jedwabne massacre came into the public domain, it slurred the Jewish victims and started portraying them as villains. Hence the appearance of the stories of rabbis betraying baptised Jews and Jewish police in the ghetto being worse than the Germans. The victim-victimiser reversal serves as a justification of the crimes committed against Jews by Poles, despite the fact that the newspaper denies that such crimes took place. In addition, the general image of the Jew victim-villain strengthens the negative portrayal of particular Jews, especially those murdered in Jedwabne.

In 2001 the Polish public was shocked by the news that in 1941 in a village on the eastern outskirts of Poland called Jedwabne, Poles with little encouragement from the Nazis staged a horrific pogrom against their Jewish neighbours. *Nasz Dziennik* in unison with the right-wing press denied that Poles took active part in this crime. The discussion about Jedwabne encouraged the newspaper to launch an antisemitic campaign. The articles about Polish-Jewish affairs from that point became increasingly fierce in tone and libellous about Jews. *Nasz Dziennik* began elaborating about a Jewish conspiracy; Jews were reported to use lies about Jedwabne to



blackmail Poland into paying them ‘billions of dollars’. This hysterical reaction owes a lot to the right-wing ethos that the newspaper popularises.

If it were not for the Jedwabne debate, many of the Jewish themes in *Nasz Dziennik* would not be discussed at such length and with such strong anti-Jewish feeling. This is why I called them ‘satellite topics’. The Kielce 1946 pogrom was presented by *Nasz Dziennik* as an example of how Poles have been abused and misjudged for the crime that as the newspaper maintains was ‘the Soviet and Zionist provocation.’ Similarly, *Nasz Dziennik*’s version of the Jedwabne massacre, Poles were not guilty of the pogrom but were made to pay for it under the international pressure and slurs published about them. After the publication of *Fear* by J. T. Gross, *Nasz Dziennik* strengthened its stance that Jews will blackmail Poland until the government pays billions of dollars in ransom. Yet again *Nasz Dziennik* completely ignored the moral implications of the hatred and prejudice that allowed ordinary people, Poles and Catholics, to justify their repulsive actions towards the Jews.

Although *Nasz Dziennik* denied the version of events during the Jedwabne massacre as recounted in *Neighbors* by J. T. Gross, nevertheless it tried to ‘offset’ the denied Polish guilt. The newspaper engaged in a peculiar ‘moral arithmetic’ in which it recounts numerous ‘crimes committed against Poles by Jews’ that are meant to demonstrate that real atrocities committed by Jews balance out the imaginary ones committed by Poles. In order to do so *Nasz Dziennik* draws onto the Żydokomuna stereotype and blames the Jews for the Stalinization of Poland and the crimes of the Communist security apparatus. As the newspaper portrays the Jews exclusively as murderers and villains it completely ignores the role of the ethnic Poles in the enforcement of the Communist regime. The articles on this theme are a desperate attempt to find the ‘the Jewish neighbours who murdered the Poles.’

In the Jedwabne discourse in *Nasz Dziennik* and in general in Polish media ‘Jews and Jewishness served as a trope to discuss Polishness and the role of Catholicism in defining and shaping the latter’.<sup>1</sup> The newspaper used the controversy to reaffirm the right-wing view that only Poles who are Catholic can be seen as real Poles. This was a backlash, not only to the Jedwabne case, but to the ongoing wider debate and re-discovery of Poland’s rich multicultural history.

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<sup>1</sup> G. Zubrzycki, *The Crosses of Auschwitz. Nationalism and Religion in Post-Communist Poland*, (Chicago and London, 2006), p. 207.



*Nasz Dziennik*'s biased reporting on the situation in the Middle East, which ignores the Jewish suffering, helps to strengthen the image of Jews-villains as Israelis are being pictured as 'worse than the Nazis.' This theme is a very prominent one as it serves a therapeutic purpose. Perception of the Jews as villains, based on the current affairs reporting, helps to shed the guilt imposed by the treatment of the Jews by Poles before and during the war. In other words, a Nazi-like image of the Jew is a bid to erase the image of the Jew-victim. If *Nasz Dziennik* can prove that after the Holocaust Jews emerged to inflict the same ordeal on innocent Palestinians, then (in its perception) the Jews have no moral right to feel as victims of a unique historical event.

Of course *Nasz Dziennik* is aware of the criticism generated by its antisemitic (also homophobic and xenophobic) articles. In response to them the newspaper disclosed yet another (alleged) Jewish conspiracy to ruin Poland and humiliate the Poles. Anti-Polonism was said to outgrow the antisemitism, which is viewed as only imagined by the Jews anyway.

As already mentioned, Polish messianism is an important element of the nation's mechanism to cope with crisis. This myth has been making it easier to survive the partitions, Nazi persecutions, loss of independence and Stalinist persecution, because it gave the suffering a deeper meaning. During the transition after 1989 many Poles applied the victim-Messiah allegory to the current situation of the country as their economic situation worsened. Except this time it was much harder to find the persecutor, responsible for the unemployment, the widening gap between the rich and the poor or an ineffective and impoverished healthcare system. Poles were not going to blame themselves for those failures, they blamed politicians and foreign investors especially, the supermarkets with foreign capital that mushroomed everywhere. However, the ultimate guilty party was needed. As I showed in the chapter 'Antisemitism', since 1918 in a situation of crisis in Poland the Jew has been blamed for various misfortunes. Also this time the nationalistic milieu pointed to the Jews and freemasons who were supposed to conspire against a free Poland. It is not a coincidence that in the decade between 1992 and 2002 levels of antisemitism in Poland rose by 10%. Clearly many Poles responded to the crisis in a familiar way of looking for the scapegoat, and the literature encouraging such move was always at hand.



During those ten years something unexpected happened in the Polish-Jewish relations, the Jedwabne massacre debate. In many ways the publication of J. T. Gross's *Neighbors* played into the hands of the nationalists and their media. Of course it was a shock and a challenge to their ideology as they felt they had to defend their version of history. But at the same time the Jedwabne case gave them something more tangible to attack rather than a far-fetched Jewish/freemason conspiracy. For once these circles had something to point to when saying 'See, the Jews want to label/blackmail/destroy us'. To say that the Jedwabne debate caused an increase of antisemitic material in *Nasz Dziennik* and other media and that it contributed to the rise of antisemitism in Poland is very contentious among Polish intellectuals who were involved in the debate. It is natural that 'scratching of the old wounds' and evoking discussions on controversial topics meets with some backlash. Nevertheless, the extent of the backlash after the Jedwabne case depended on the 'damage control' expected from the elites, and especially the Church. The Jedwabne debate revealed limited influence of the elites over the views of society. It also showed how divided those intellectual elites are. As I discussed in chapter X: Religious antisemitism?, Catholic intellectuals promote the dialogue with Judaism, but on the level of historical dialogue they are much keener to 'confess the sins and repent'. This approach, though soothing, stops the process of re-evaluation of Poland's history. The Jedwabne debate was not followed by examination of ideologies that allowed people during the war to distance themselves from the Jews and in extreme situations to justify the atrocities committed against them. The Jedwabne debate was a chance to condemn past and present nationalism. Again, the Polish elites underestimated the strength of the nationalistic element in Poland in 2001, they dismissed the problem, only to see the nationalists in the government in 2005. I am not suggesting that the Jedwabne debate resulted in the electoral gains of the right-wing parties; Jewish issues are only one of many elements in the complex Polish political life. What is certain is that liberal elites lost the chance the debate brought, while nationalistic media such as *Nasz Dziennik* were able to use the debate to promote their ideology.

When discussing Polish collective memory about World War II, I mentioned that Jews are absent from it. Also the fact that Jewish life ceased to exist in Poland is not regretted by the majority of the society. Embracing of the Jewish heritage as a part of the Polish heritage, and of Jews as Polish citizens whose contribution to national life is valued, are essential for the change in how Jews are remembered by Poles. This



reframing of memory is important if Poland were to embrace certain civic values today. Many grass-roots initiatives implement this aim, however their actions cannot replace for example a coherent programme to teach about the history of the Jews in Poland initiated by the government.

Another stage on Poland's route to civil society is building a positive image of the nation, which is not based on whitewashing the history. Poles need to admit to themselves that not always in their history they were honourable and that sometimes they also inflicted suffering on other nations and minorities that lived among them. The layers of whitewashed versions of history need to be peeled off voluntarily by Poles, not when some important issues in foreign relations dictate grand commemorative gestures and public apologies by the head of state. Again this is a long-term process that above all has to start in the Polish schools.

The year 2007 has brought a debate in Polish public life that has shaken the monolithic nationalistic definition of patriotism. Until now the right-wing parties were elected on the slate that their members were oppositionists, never involved in the Communist apparatus. These parties were closely allied with the Church that also exploited its oppositionist past and involvement in the fight for freedom. The right-wing politicians postulated de-communisation of public life and exclusion of those who collaborated with the Security Service from important public posts. After the Archbishop Wielgus's affair<sup>2</sup> the full complexity and ambiguity of recent Polish history has been exposed. Although it is a bit too early to say what consequences this unexpected outcome of de-communisation will have, we can already see that it threatens the right-wing ethos of perceiving the Polish nation and its history in black and white colours.

So far I talked about the backlash from the Jedwabne debate and the conflict of Polish and Jewish memories about the suffering of the two groups during World War II. These are important factors that explain why *Nasz Dziennik* reverts to the

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<sup>2</sup> Archbishop Wielgus a prominent Church leader and theologian was about to become Poland's next Cardinal when the news broke that in the early 1970s he was collaborating with the Security Services (SB). The affair grabbed the headlines from Dec. 2006 to Feb. 2007 until a dramatic mass which was once planned as his inauguration as Cardinal. Wielgus resigned among vocal protests from Radio Maryja supporters who armed with umbrellas attacked the press for 'stoning a great person with their slurs'. This was not the first prominent collaboration case involving a high-profile clergy, but the previous one concerning Father Michał Czajkowski touched not the 'patriotic' but the 'liberal' Church. Czajkowski has been one of the most prominent initiators of the Jewish-Catholic dialogue in Poland. Wielgus on the other hand was a favourite of Radio Maryja. See: On Czajkowski's case *Więź*, vol. 7-8, July-Aug. 2006 and *Nasz Dziennik*'s fierce defence of Wielgus in C. Bartnik, 'Oczyszczanie Kościoła poprzez zabijanie duchownych', *Nasz Dziennik*, 11: 13-14 Jan. 2007, pp. 16-17.



antisemitic rhetoric. However, these are also the more immediate causes of antisemitism in the right-wing milieu and in *Nasz Dziennik* in particular. I would compare the memory and image conflict factors that fuel antisemitism in the newspaper to a tree; these factors are the ones that we see above the surface. The systematic analysis of *Nasz Dziennik*'s material from over eight years since it was first published allowed me to identify the less obvious, hidden causes of antisemitism – the roots that feed what we see (or rather read) on a day to day basis in *Nasz Dziennik*. The more fundamental and long-term causes of antisemitism are two-fold: firstly they are connected to religion, secondly to the political ethos of the pre-war *Endecja*.

Although *Nasz Dziennik* is not expressing religious antisemitic views in most of its material related to Jews, the *Passion of the Christ* controversy showed that these views are never far from the surface to emerge at the first opportunity. This is why we can say that the contempt of the newspaper for Jewish suffering is underpinned by a contempt for Judaism, especially the Talmud. Despite the fact that the majority of antisemitic material in *Nasz Dziennik* relates to political and remembrance issues, the medieval, chimerical image of the Jew has never been verified by the authors who write for the newspaper. *Nasz Dziennik* is not representative of the whole of the Roman Catholic Church but it is representative of its significant part that shares anti-Jewish sentiments. As I demonstrated throughout this work this sentiment is not only shared by provincial parishioners but also by some Church officials at the highest level. Thus, the issue of antisemitism in *Nasz Dziennik* forms a part of a larger issue of antisemitism within the Church in Poland and the two cannot be tackled separately.

The second long-term source of antisemitism in *Nasz Dziennik* is the specific type of nationalism that emerged from the pre-war *Endecja* movement. In the chapter XI: Politics I demonstrated the links between *Nasz Dziennik* and the right-wing parties, especially the League of Polish Families, which follows firmly in R. Dmowski's footsteps. This link is not coincidental or purely opportunistic as *Nasz Dziennik*'s ideology is firmly rooted in the pre-war nationalism. Even though most recently *Nasz Dziennik* decided to support PiS with its milder form of nationalism it still promotes more extreme political views in its articles. Disregard for human and civic rights of the Jews, perception of Judaism as being poisoned by the Talmud, refusal to acknowledge that Jews can benefit Polish culture and economy are all



common points where the ideology of pre-war nationalism meets with that of *Nasz Dziennik* as I demonstrated in my comparison with *Mały Dziennik*.

So far I have referred to the (mimetic) conflict over the self-image of the Poles as presented by the nationalists. This idealised image is challenged by the Jewish requests for Poles to acknowledge the 'darker' part of Polish history, especially during the Holocaust and immediately after the war. *Nasz Dziennik* responded to the attempts to tarnish the unequivocally heroic and innocent image of Poles with a backlash of antisemitic slurs. It fought hard to preserve the memory of the wartime in which Poles only saved the Jews, often paying for it with their own life.

In addition, because of the newspaper's ideological background we observe a clash of two images of the Jew – one mythical-chimerical rooted in the pre-war ideology that constructed it from the centuries-old prejudices and the other of people who suffered discrimination that at times resulted in physical violence at the hands of Poles before, during and after the war. We also deal with the conflict over the memories of the role of Jews in Polish history. One version, presented by *Nasz Dziennik* is that Jews always acted with the worst intentions against Poland and the Poles. The other version, presented by the mainstream media and intellectuals is that Jews were and are an integral and valuable part of what constitutes Poland. The myths that construct the negative image of the Jew and his role in Polish history fuel the negative reactions of *Nasz Dziennik* to more recent issues. In other words, a publication, film or a new museum cause new conflicts because they challenge the symbols dear to *Nasz Dziennik*, but also because they come from the ultimate Other. As the myth portraying the Jew as guilty of various transgressions is so strong among the nationalistic milieu, so is the reaction to the attempts to demystify it proportionally vicious. This is why disputes over controversial historical topics with the Russians or Ukrainians do not attract as much attention as do the Jewish themes (although they are reported and those nations are also collectively attacked). Yet again the negative myth about the Jew is far stronger, bears more sociological markers singling the Jew out, than those about other nations. Sadly, this is not just the case in *Nasz Dziennik* but across Polish society as demonstrated in recent sociological research.

More generally, over the past 18 years antisemitism became again part of a broader cultural code, this time it is anti-liberalism or in another variation anti-globalisation. *Nasz Dziennik* and other right-wing media strongly oppose loosening of



moral values and family ties, globalisation, avid consumerism, breaking of taboos, homosexuality and abortion. Jews again became the symbol of all those changes that are feared by the right-wing milieu. The times and ideologies have changed but the new generations of nationalists use the same old banner blaming ‘Jews and freemasons’ for all evils. The recycled symbol/myth lends power to the new campaigns as it is rooted in the old myths – the ones about Żydokomuna, Jewish promiscuity and twisted values of the Talmud. Elusive and complex liberalism and globalisation become much better targets once a real group is identified as engineering the threatening changes. The reformulation of antisemitism as a new cultural code was a process. I would strongly argue that it was not inevitable. As I have demonstrated in this work, for over eight years *Nasz Dziennik* gradually tested the waters and has introduced new, increasingly more damaging, antisemitic themes. This has been also true for other right-wing media and politicians. As there are no repercussions for using the antisemitic codes in the media and political discourse, we can only expect that this situation will continue. Also, we have to remember that once myths and stereotypes enter the public domain they do not tend to disappear even when their proponents do. The revitalised antisemitic rhetoric will continue to resonate with a significant part of Polish society even when today’s political parties and media will lose their prominence. This work testifies how easily old myths are revived.



**Appendix**

Chart mapping the frequency of appearance of articles<sup>1</sup> related to the Jedwabne case in *Nasz Dziennik* in 2001 and 2002.

2001	A	B	C
January	3	1	2
February	3	1	—
March	8	2	—
April	7	2	4
May	2	3	—
June	3	3	5
July	2	2	—
August	—	—	1
September	1	1	—
October	—	—	2
November	1	1	2
December	1	—	—
Total	31	16	17

2002	A	B	C
January	—	2	—
February	1	—	—
March	—	4	—
April	—	—	1
May	—	—	2
June	1	2	2
July	5	7	1
August	—	6	1
September	—	—	2
October	—	1	4
November	—	—	—
December	1	2	—
Total	8	24	13



**A** – articles about the Jedwabne massacre

**B** – articles indirectly related to the Jedwabne murders, which were written in response to the debate about the massacre, for example those about the Jewish crimes, Żydokomuna, ‘Holocaust industry’

**C** – other major articles on Jewish themes not related to the topic of the Jedwabne massacre for example on crimes committed by the state by Israel

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<sup>i</sup> This summary includes only major articles, usually essays in the Sunday issues, and omits readers’ letters or articles that briefly mentioned the Jedwabne case but were not directly related to this theme, for example articles commenting on current political or economic issues.



## Abbreviations

AK – Armia Krajowa – Home Army

CEBOS – Centrum Badań Opinii Społecznej – Public Opinion Research Centre

*EEJA – East European Jewish Affairs*

IPN – Instytut Pamięci Narodowej – Institute of National Remembrance

KBW – Korpus Bezpieczeństwa Wewnętrznego – Internal Security Corps

KRRiT – Krajowa Rada Radiofonii i Telewizji – National Committee of Radio and Television

LPR – Liga Polskich Rodzin – League of Polish Families

MSZ – Ministerstwo Spraw Zagarnicznych – Ministry of Foreign Affairs

NKVD – Narodny Komitet Vnutrennikh Del – People's committee of Internal Affairs

NSZ – Narodowe Siły Zbrojne – National Armed Forces

OBOP – Ośrodek Badań Opinii Publicznej – Public Opinion Research Unit

PiS – Prawo i Sprawiedliwość – Law and Order

PRL – Polska Rzeczpospolita Ludowa – People's Republic of Poland

SB – Służba Bezpieczeństwa – Security Services

SLD – Sojusz Lewicy Demokratycznej – Democratic Left Alliance

SN – Stronnictwo Narodowe – National

UB – colloquial abbreviation of Urząd Bezpieczeństwa Publicznego [UBP] – [Public] Security Office

ZBoWiD – Związek Bojowników o Wolność i Demokrację – Veterans Association

ZGWŻ – Związek Gmin Wyznaniowych Żydowskich – Union of Jewish Religious Communities

ŻIH – Żydowski Instytut Historyczny – Jewish Historical Institute



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